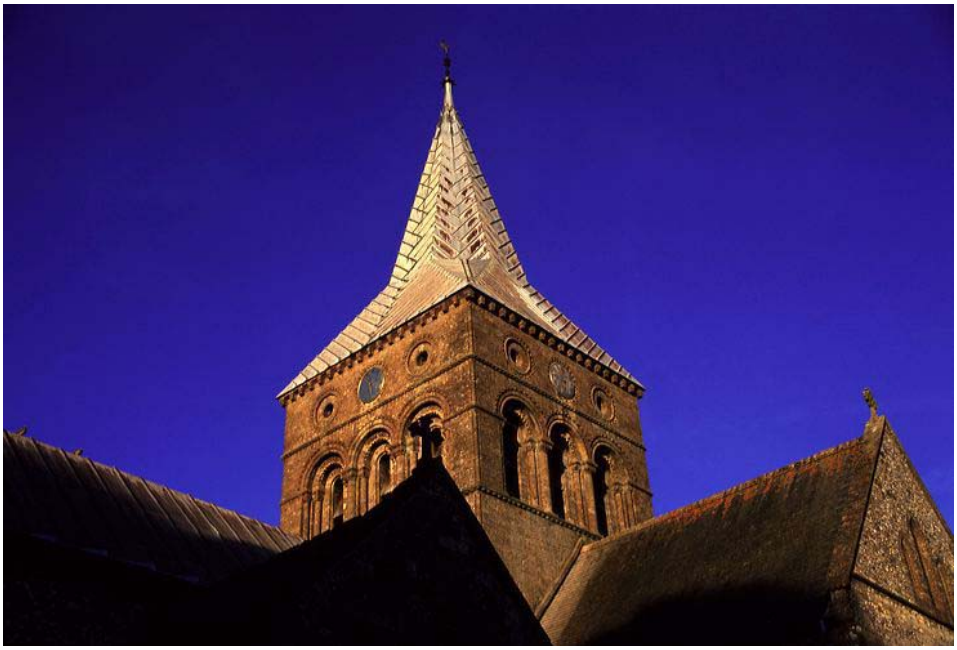
A Short History of All Saints

By Michael Blakstad



All Saints Church photographed by Chris Warren

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

Introduction

Christianity arrived in the Meon Valley in the 7th century AD when farmers first moved down from the high ground above the valley to the site of today's village a mile and a half from the source of the River Meon. East Meon rapidly became an important parish and manor, and the largest of the Hampshire estates of the bishops of Winchester. The original Saxon church and bishops' palace were replaced in the 11th and 14th centuries by magnificent buildings which have been well preserved to the present day.

Throughout the Middle Ages, All Saints church was a place both of worship and of local government while the bishops and their stewards administered their land and tenants from their palace at the Court House next door. The diocese invested in the church building: Henry of Blois donated the magnificent Tournai font and Peter des Roches added the south nave and lady chapel. Only traces now remain of the pre-Reformation décor; the Parliamentary army encamped in East Meon on their way to the battle of Cheriton and removed the vicar and any remaining 'idolatry'; the church escaped Victorian alteration but was deftly refurbished by Sir Ninian Comper in the early 20th century.

The history of the building and its place in the life of East Meon is taken from a variety of sources; a history of All Saints written by the Reverend Terry Louden, vicar from 1996 to 2015[1], the monumental History of the English Parish by N.J.G.Pounds, which describes the development of church buildings and parish life[2] and, thirdly, research by members of East Meon History Group, much of it related in the book 'Farming the Valley' published in 2019 .

Anglo Saxon

Christianity was brought to the Meon Valley in the 7th century by one of two missionaries. Bishop Birinus was a Frank who came to Kent with Augustine of Canterbury on a mission to convert the West Saxons. He landed in Hamwic (today's Southampton) in 634 and established a church at Porchester , working his way northward, baptising and teaching as he went. He died in 649. The other candidate is St Wilfrid: a Northumbrian noble and a controversial bishop, expelled in 678 by the Northumbrian king Ecgfrith and forced to go south on a mission to convert the South Saxons (the '*Kingdom of Sussex*'). He was based in Selsey until he was recalled to Northumbria in 686.

The parish of East Meon appears to have grown rapidly in importance: it may have been a *mynster*: a form of *monasterium,* a church served by a community of celibates rather than a single priest[3]: they lived under communal rules and served as hubs for networks of churches and bases from which missionaires set

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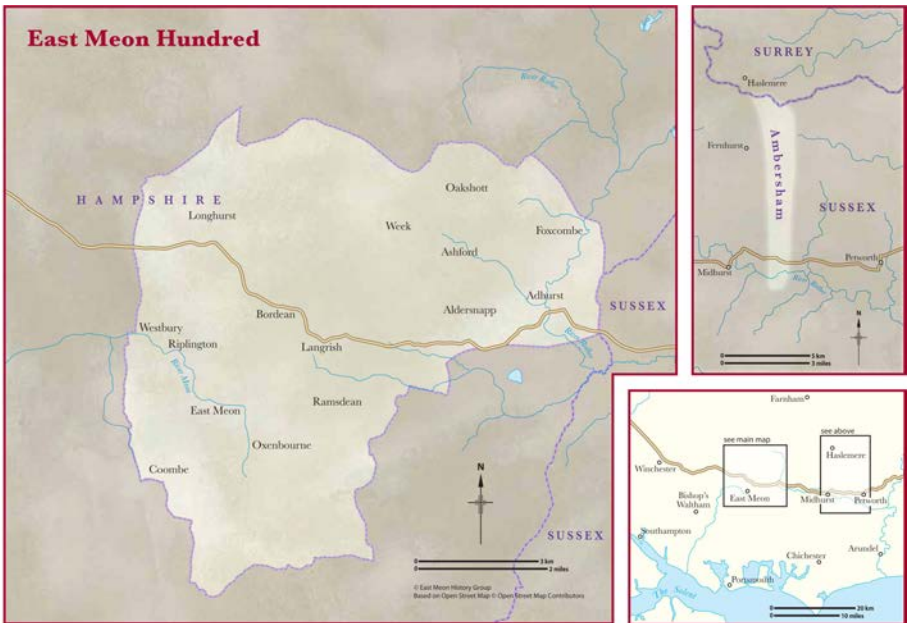
[1] Rev Terry Louden *History of All Saints* East Meon History Website: http://www.eastmeonhistory.net/church/

[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

out to convert other communities to Christianity[4]. Royal or aristocratic patronage provided minsters with security and recruits and East Meon's status is confirmed by the Saxon charter of 970 AD which recounts that King Edgar granted '*that famouse place which the locals have always called Aet Meon*' to his grandmother Eadgifu. There are no traces of the original Saxon church: the Norman building would have been erected directly on top of it.

By the time of the Norman invasion, East Meon was the administrative and ecclesiastical centre of a large area: a Hundred which included the tithings of, Langrish, Oxenbourne, Ramsdean, Coombe, Riplington, Steep and Froxfield (as well as Ambersham, now in Sussex located between Midhurst and Petworth, improbably described as '*part of Hampshire'*). The same geography also defined the *parochia,* or parish, of East Meon, and of two manors, *Menes Manerium* and *Menes Ecclesia*. The hundred, parish and manors comprised the largest Hampshire estate of the bishops of Winchester[5].



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

The Middle Ages

It is not possible to define precisely the boundary of Menes Ecclesia, which comprised roughly 700 acres in and around the settlement of East Meon; it was completely surrounded by the much larger Menes Manor. For a millennium the Bishops of Winchester were lords of both manors: they were also rectors of the parish of East Meon, whose area covered both manors. The vicar of All Saints acted *in vice* (vicariously) in place of the bishop. As we shall see, he received the lesser, or *vicarial* tithes, and may have been paid a benefice. He also received fees for ceremonies such as baptisms, marriages and funerals and would have been

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

[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/reasearch/medieval-farming/.

paid to write documents on behalf of parishioners, such as wills, and to teach the children of farmers who could afford to pay for their eduction.

We don't know the location of the vicarage, but it probably stood in the position of. today's White House, on the junction by the lych gate. The parish included chapels in Froxfield, Steep and Ambersham, as well as two '*chapels of ease*': St Mary's in the Field near the source of the River Meon and St Nicholas at Westbury House. It was up to each vicar how many curates he employed to help him provide services throughout the parish, but it would have been difficult to ride to all the outlying tithings on Sundays and holy days: masses at Steep, Froxfield and Ambersham were almost certainly said by curates, one or more of whom would have resided in the tithing.

The building

12th century

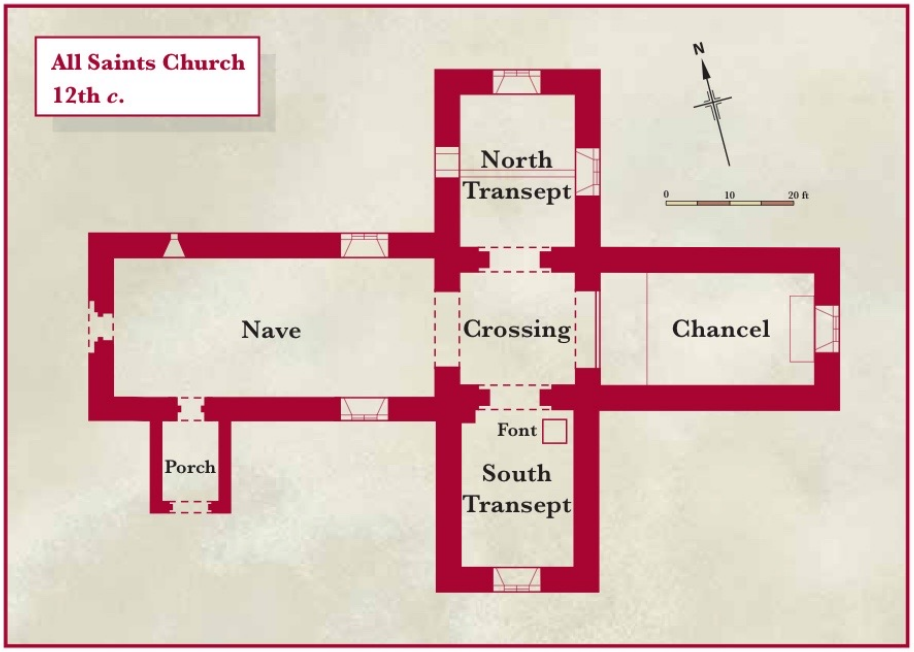
The oldest parts of All Saints church were planned in the 11th century and completed in the 12th, largely under Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester from 1129 to 1171. It was cruciform in shape, consisting of nave, chancel and transept; the Victoria County History suggests that '*the excess of width 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, of which nothing remains.

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

Of the twelfth-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).

Romanesque arches in the crossing leading to north transept and chancel

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 added[6].



Floor plan of the church, started in the 11th century and completed in the 12th.

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[7]. 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 greatest 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

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

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

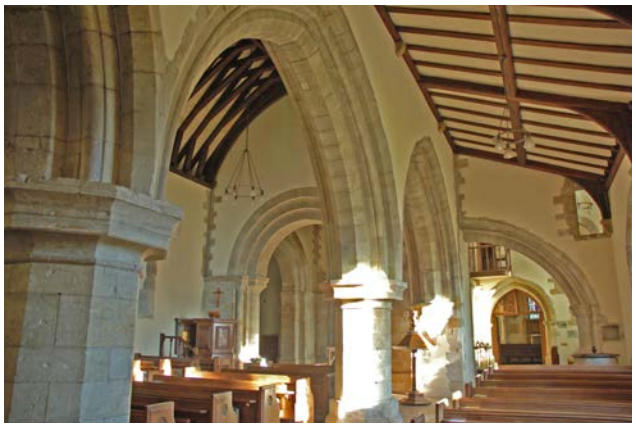
the River Meon, but Henry did establish a workshop in Winchester to which he imported Tournai craftsmen; it may have been carved there and carted to East Meon.

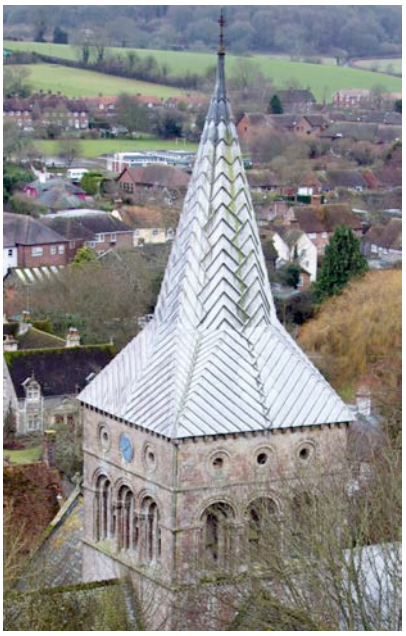
The Tournai Font, originally placed in the south transept. Left, pillars support the earth. Below, Eve is created and eats the forbidden fruit. © Dr. John Crook

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

A century later, the diocesan lands were yielding substantial returns and Bishop Peter des Roches (1205 – 1238) invested heavily in deer parks and fishponds in East Meon[8]. It was probably des Roches who enlarged All Saints by widening the church to the south: expanding to the north was not an option because it is set against the slope of Park Hill. The south wall of the 12th century church was removed, and the chancel was separated from the new lady chapel by an arcade with '*sturdy round pier, round capitals and abacus and big hollow chamfers in the arches'* – Pevsner - and the nave by '*very short octagonal piers'*[9]. The nave and the chancel are separated by a half-arch and the Tournai font was moved from the south transept. The steeple was added to the tower arches in around 1250 and may be the earliest surviving timber framed spire of its kind in England or Normandy[10].





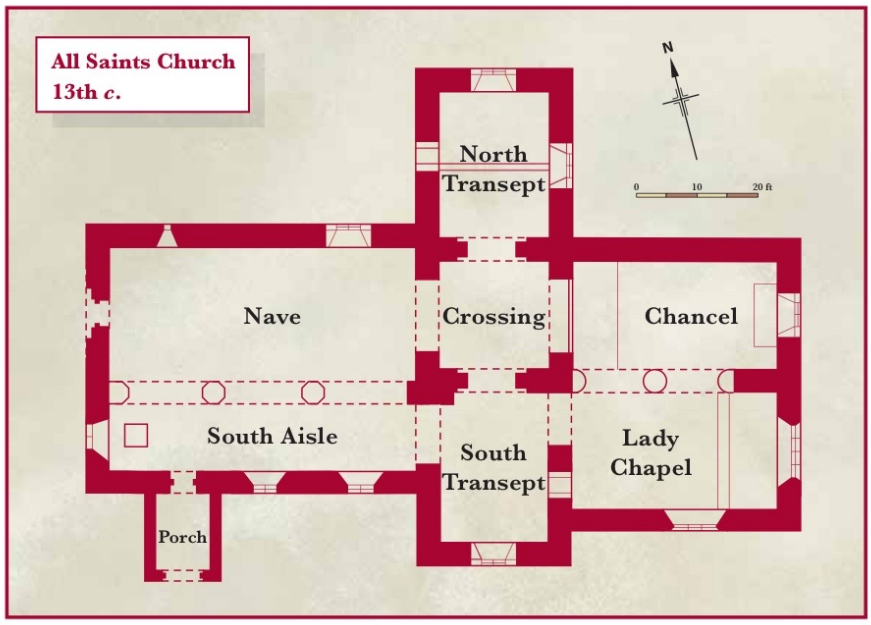
South aisle with Early English arches, above, and the steeple, right, added to the tower.

The reason for extending the church in the 12th and 13th centuries was both an increase in population and changes in religious practice; a second altar was needed 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 one writer has described as a 'celestial bombardment'. Like the main altar, it would have been of stone, set against the east wall, and the priest conducted the service with his back to the congregation.

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

[9] Bullen, Crook, Hubbuck and Pevsner *Ibid* p 242

[10] Bullen, Crook, Hubbuck and Pevsner *Ibid* p 241



12th century addition of South Aisle, South Chapel and Porch

The walls of the nave would have been heavily decorated with '*moralities*' and paintings of biblical scenes. Some benches were now introduced, occupied by the more prominent parishioners, and these occupied more space. Chantries and funerary monuments in the nave added to the clutter. The newly extended 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.

14th century

In the fourteenth century, the heads of a man and a woman were carved on corbels on the nave window; it is conjectured that these represent the bishop's steward and his wife

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

Also in the 14th century. a rood screen would have been built to separate the chancel from nave. It contained carvings of saints and floral patterns, with a Calvary, or rood, on top of the screen and a painting of the '*doom*', or Last Judgment, on the arch above it[11].

On the outside east wall, the rebus of Bishop Langton

The last building work in the Middle Ages involved the rebuilding of the north and east walls of the chancel in the late 15th century; this work is commemorated by a rebus of Bishop Langton o the outside of the east wall, the effigy being a pair of elongated dragons each wearing a barrel, or *'tun'*, his arms being a pun on his name – '*long-tun'*. As rector of East Meon, the bishop was responsible for repairs to the chancel. Another carving on the east wall contains the arms of Prior Hinton and the monastery of St. Swithun of Winchester.

The completed building, much as it was in the thirteenth century

[11] See page 6; there are traces of these paintings on the north-east pillar of the transept

The church in the community

The use of the church building was not confined to religious services on high days and holidays: it was used throughout the week, inside and out, both as a community centre and as the administrative hub of the parish. The equivalent of today's Parochial Church Council met in the '*vestry*' in the north transept and took its name from it[12]; at annual meetings yeoman farmers and other worthies were elected to the Vestry as churchwardens, sidesmen, overseers and surveyors of bridges and roads. They were unpaid but employed the sexton, clerk, constables and other officers who were paid out of the parish funds. These also included the '*beggar-banger*', responsible for controlling the length of stay of any unwanted 'stranger', and the '*knocknobbler*', whose job it was to drive dogs out of the church. The parish vestry was recognised in 17th century legislation as the most effective form of local government and continued in this role, under the supervision of local JPs, until the 19th century when they were replaced with district and town councils.

While the diocese held Courts Leet and Manorial Courts in the Hall at the Court House to administer its lands and sort out disputes with tenants, the church ruled on issues from sexual morality to wills and inventories: the Archdeacon's court met from time to time in the western end of the church, while the vicar and his clerk were often the only literate people in the parish and wrote wills and other documents on behalf of his parishioners; the vicar also taught the children of those wealthy enough to pay him.

The nave housed meetings of the whole parish and many forms of social activity as well, including the convivial '*church ales*' held on feast days. (Beer was safer than water and was brewed by the wardens in the vicarage: even the children drank '*small beer*'.) In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, 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 space 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. Wealthy parishioners who bequeathed money for the purpose were buried inside the church with a gravestone to commemorate them[13].

The church was lit by lantern candles during services, glinting off the silver and pewter altar ware especially on feast days[14]. The priest wore a coloured chasuble and cope and the congregation was treated to glimpses, though the rood screen,

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[12] All Saints, despite its size and importance, appears not to have had a separate vestry; the present vesting area was built as part of the frame of the Millennium Tapestry in the early 21st century.

[13] Gravestones from earlier periods were transferred to the Lady Chapel during Victorian refurbishments.

[14] During the Middle Ages only the priest received the wine, which meant that 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.

of a rich spectacle. 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 the19th century[15]. The candles, vestments, incense, as well as the maintenance of the nave and churchyard 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.

The churchyard

Less-well-off parishoners were buried in the churchyard in unmarked graves. The vicar, his wardens and the 'knock-knobbler' fought a constant battle to keep parishioners and their animals from treating the churchyard as their own.
In many villages the churchyard provided the largest and most convenient public space for gatherings of local people. In the 12th century, unofficial markets were held on feast days at major churches, like All Saints: these churchyard markets were unpopular with the church authorities, which tried unsuccessfully to suppress them. The neighbouring town of Petersfield had received a charter in the 12th century to hold a market for sheep and wool, and East Meon held an annual fair on Lady Day, March 25th, in *Fairfield,* belonging to the chapel of St Mary's in the Fields near the source of the River Meon; recent research shows that 'pop-up' market stalls were often erected on feast days within or around the boundary of the churchyard. Mark Page published in 2017 his findings that in 1321 Thomas Mason left to his wife and brother two stalls 'next to the stile'. Thomas le Barrer had a third stall, and in 1330 Richard le Ridler inherited what was now a semi-permanent shop next to the style at the western end of the churchyard[16]. (The names, '*Mason*' and '*Ridler*' suggest that these outfits provided materials for what appears to have been a busy time for building in the village.)

Tithes.

As rectors of All Saints the bishops of Winchester were entitled to the '*greater*' tithes, i.e. one tenth of all crops and produce, which were collected in the rectorial tithe barn in the *curia* or farmyard of the Court House. The vicar, acting '*vicariously'* for the rector, survived on the '*lesser'* tithes, a tenth of the produce of the villagers' vegetable patches, a modest stipend[17]. The vicar also received the produce of the glebe land and fees from conducting services, such as mortuaries paid at burials. Details of tithes paid in the hundred of East Meon provided by the Victoria County History can be found in Appendix 1.

The Reformation complicated matters because many of the holdings of monastic bodies fell into the hands of the Crown, and then into lay hands so that a lay

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[15] The cost of producing books meant that only the priest had access to the 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 heard.
[16] Page, Mark. *Village shops in Medieval Hampshire: the case of East Meon* Hampshire Field Club 2017 p7. The article is attached as Appendix B
[17] The ancient system consisted of three separate tithes: *Praedial Tithes* which were calculated on income from produce (corn, oats, wood &c), *Mixed Tithes* which were calculated on the income from a combination of stock and labour (wood, pigs, milk &c) and *Personal Tithes* assessed on income derived from labour.

person could collect the *rectorial* Tithes. The bishops of Winchester; however, remained lords of the manors of East Meon and received both tithes and rents until the Civil War, when the lands were assigned to supporters of the Commonwealth; after the Restoration, the manors were returned to the bishops but supporters of Charles I were granted tenancy of much of the estate, and many of the new landlords bought the rectorial tithes from the diocese.

The Black Death

The Great Plague affected East Meon as badly as it did the rest of Hampshire. The vicar of East Meon from 1341 – 1361 was John Ace, who had one curate at All Saints and two more looking after Steep and Froxfield. Ace was seldom in East Mon; as Notary Public for the Bishop his presence was required at Wolvesey Palace in Winchester and the curates would have looked after the parish. In 1346 the stipend for a curate was £3.6s. 6d , the equivalent of only £2,500 in today's money. Local clergy were very exposed to the plague, hearing confessions administering sacraments and conducting funerals. Two of the three curates in East Meon parish either died or fled; 48% of the clergy in the Diocese perished (although John Ace survived, no doubt benefiting from his 'back office' role at the Bishop's palace. In the hundred of East Meon, of a population of around 850 it is estimated that 240 tenant farmers alone died in 1349, the first full year of the plague: deaths among serfs and paupers would have been even more numerous.

Reformation and Civil War

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 (right)

Even before Henry VIII and the full-blooded Reformation, many churches saw their rood, and often its screen, removed as well as most of the images which decorated the church. Under Henry, Edward, Mary and Elizabeth there was a bewildering ebb and flow of removal, destruction, restoration and renewed removal. The holes in the pillars to the west of the central transept of All Saints show where brackets once held the rood screen and there are faint traces of a mural on the north-east pillar. Any remaining screens and stone altars were removed under Henry and Edward, hastily restored as best they could under Mary, then taken down again under Elizabeth. They 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 19th century 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*'[18] Much of the destruction of the 1540s and 1550s was orchestrated, paid for, and controlled by the wardens.

In the reign of Edward VII the sermon become the chief vehicle in spreading 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.

[18] Dixon, Richard W. *History of the Church of England from the Abolition of the Roman Jurisdiction,* London 1878, 111, 453

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.

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 change in the regime: the accession of the first Stuart monarch. …

Under Charles I, Archbishop Laud, who would have been described as a High Churchman in today's terminology, 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, the 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 poorer citizens, caused by a combination of famine and '*war typhus'*; any surviving stained glass, carvings or wall paintings were now defaced. Waller's dissenters also left behind the remains of four men, probably soldiers, curiously buried upright in a wood at Bordon, marked by the inscription '*Amens Plenty'* (right) which is now mounted in the south transept. This may have been an ironic reference to the tendency of Puritan preachers and their congregations to punctuate their sermons with '*Amens*'. The vicar of All Saints, John Shrigley, was one of over 2,000 Anglican clergy who were 'sequestered' by Parliament because they did not match up to the puritan ethic of the protestants; he was imprisoned and subsequently died in Essex. He had been appointed two years earlier by Walter Curle, a Royalist Bishop of Winchester who had supported Archbishop Laud[19] and who was deposed when Waller captured Winchester in 1645 and died in Soberton two years later.

[19] 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/

Post Restoration

There was now much more interaction between minister and congregation, and the altar table was brought forward to the front of the chancel.

Sermons could be interminably long, and there are records of hour glasses being purchased, to be placed in the pulpit where both preacher and congregation could see them.
All Saints' pulpit (left) dates from 1706 and was originally housed in the church of Holy Trinity, Minories, near the Tower of London, which was demolished in 1899 and was brought to East Meon by Rev E.M. Tomlinson who had previously been the incumbent of Holy Trinity.

To make congregations more comfortable during the 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. The wealthiest bought the locations nearest the altars, forcing the least-well-off to huddle at the back of the church. Social strife resulted, which had to be patrolled by the hapless churchwardens[20]. Pews were legally part of their owner's estate and were bequeathed or sold along with house and other property.

In contrast with cathedrals, which retained the organ and the trained choir to perform the polyphonic music 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, possibly in a small band. '*Noise was a crucial element in celebration'*[21] and a heavy drain on the churchwardens' budget.

[20] 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
[21] David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* London 1987 pp86 - 103

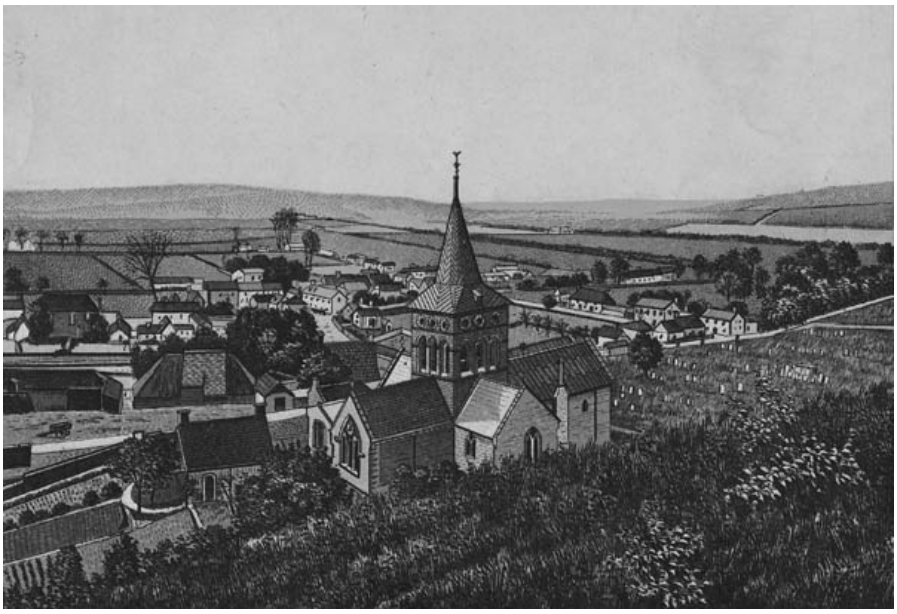
Of the surviving bells in the All Saints belfry (above), the two oldest date back to the 18th century, a further six to the 19th and the newest, the treble and the second, cast as recently as 1990, when they were all rehung with new fittings following a fund-raising drive in the parish which included the Hells Bells Ball in Mascombe Bottom on Park Hill.

The parish's role in civil administration grew still further in the seventeenth century when Kings and Parliament took advantage of an unpaid local civil service by making parishes responsible for collection of 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; providing you could prove you were born or had full residence in the parish, you would not starve. By 1727, East Meon had its own workhouse, administered by the church worthies, which survived until the 19th century when the government decided to strip parishes of their duties of care, setting up district councils and union workhouses in nearby towns.

The 19th century

The tithing of turnips

The vicar of East Meon from 1826 to1867 was the Reverend Thomas Cook Kemp who famously increased the tithes he received by insisting that farmers paid him an additional one-tenth of the value of turnips grubbed up for animal feed. The owner of Bereleigh, Captain Samuel Pechell RN, refused on behalf of less-well-off tenant farmers to pay the extra tithe and Kemp took him to the Court of the Exchequer, which supported the vicar. However, in 1835 Pechell's brother, the newly elected MP for Brighton, proposed and succeeded in passing a Bill *for the amendment of the Law as to the Tithing of Turnips*' and a year later Parliament passed the *Tithes Commutation Act* which led to a complete overhaul of the system of tithes which were now to be paid in cash instead of kind. Finally, the Tithe Act 1925 transferred the income to the Queen Anne's bounty fund and the Tithe Act 1936 extinguished tithes altogether.



1880s engraving of All Saints and the village. There was a groundsman's cottage in the churchyard.

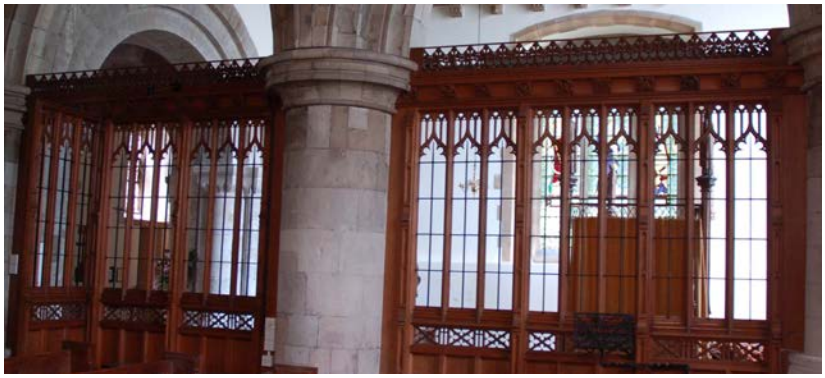
The church

There were few changes to the structure and décor of All Saints until the early twentieth century. Perhaps because the parish was largely agricultural and was comparatively poor, perhaps because the vicars were canny with their money, the church escaped the worst of the ravages of Victorian so-called restoration. In the 1840s the Rev. Kemp persuaded the diocese to build him a substantial new vicarage to the west of the church but he appears to have been particularly frugal in his capital spending on the church: it was his successor, William Brodie (1868 – 1882) who commissioned a distinguished architect, Ewan Christian, to refurbish the infrastructure of the church: the visible signs of this restoration are gutters and down pipes. Christian worked on the roofs, especially the Lady Chapel, chancel and transepts, and also on 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.

Left, the new vicarage, built in the 1840s, and, above, the three-faced clock, installed in the 1870s

The 20th century.

In the first decade of the century an enlightened vicar, Thomas Heywood Masters (1902 – 1922), engaged a distinguished Arts and Crafts architect, Ninian Comper, to refurbish the church. He designed much of the woodwork you can see today, notably the reredos and screens in the Lady Chapel, the lectern with its splendid angels, both altars and their riddel posts.



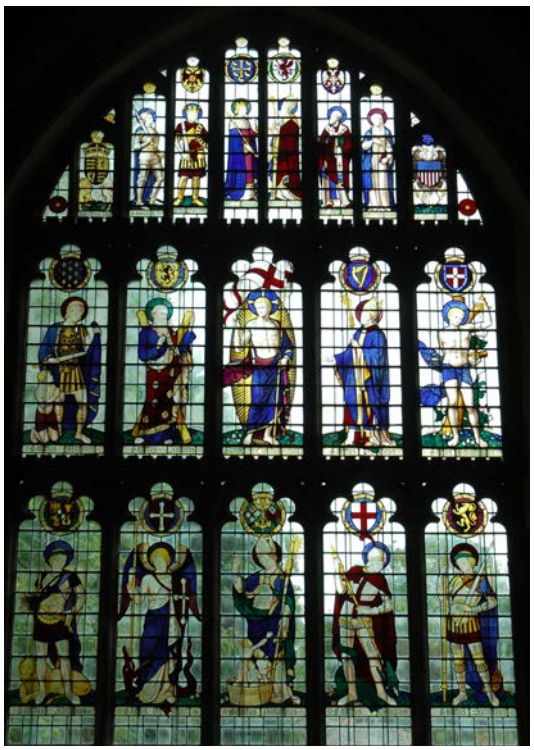
Left, reredos screen, by Comper; below left, angel on lectern; right, filigree woodwork above entrance to Lady Chapel.

Vicar at war

Basil Denne Reed had a busy war. He was the curate of All Saints, living at Orchard Cottage; he had to deputise for his vicar, the Reverend Masters, who was 49 when he volunteered for active service. Subsequent medical examinations established that he had previously suffered from chest congestion, but this doesn't seem to have prevented him being accepted. He served first as a Red Cross ambulance driver and then, from 1915, as Chaplain to the 4th Army; he

served in France, including the Somme, and was twice mentioned in despatches. In October 1918, a medical board sent him home on three weeks' rest leave suffering from debilitation – '*rest, tonic, change*' - but still managed to return to the front in time to witness the end of the war. He was twice mentioned in dispatches and awarded the CBE.

In 1920, Masters commissioned Comper to create two memorials to the war: 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, and the War Memorial in the High Street.



The east window, Comper's memorial to the allied nations who fought in World War I

Comper's War Memorial in the High Street

The War Memorial is dedicated in 1923.

The Millennium

The church hall, to the left of the main church, and a talk inside the hall by the Rev Terry Louden.

The Millennium was celebrated firstly by the building of a Church Hall which was dedicated in November 2000. The project was led by parishioner Captain Chris Cobley, RN, and raised £221,000; architect Gary Seymour produced an elegant design in flint and oak and tucked the hall away between the north wall of the nave of All Saints and the steep slope of Park Hill.

The Millennium Embroidery by needlewomen, men and children of the parish is a tableau of the village. The oak frame was made by an American cabinet maker, Steve Lamont, who was living in the village at the time, and doubles as the vestry.

The millennium tapestry in the north transept.

Top left, wedding procession by the lych gate of All Saints, right, the allotments. Above left, detail of border, right, the Hall at the Court House.

Footnote

Nicholas Pevsner described All Saints as '*one of the most thrilling village churches in Hampshire*'[22]. Amen to that, or even … Amens plenty.

[22] Nicholas Pevsner and David Lloyd *Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* The Buildings of England University Press, Yale. 2002 P199

Appendices

Appendix 1: Victoria County History on tithes in East Meon

In the thirteenth century the vicarage of East Meon was endowed with tithes great and small from the four tenements of the hamlet of Froxfield, tithes great and small from the chapelry of Westbury annexed to the church of East Meon, all offerings belonging to the church of East Meon with the chapels annexed to it, viz. Froxfield, Steep, and St. Mary's-in-the-Field, five eggs payable at Easter from every man holding land in the parish of the mother church of East Meon and the hamlet and chapelry of Froxfield, all profits and fees arising from the punishment of offenders in the peculiar and exempt jurisdiction within the parish of East Meon and the chapelries adjacent to it, five quarters of corn from the granges of the bishop of Winchester, and ten acres of arable land. Henry de Woodlock, bishop of Winchester, had intended to augment the vicarage, but was prevented by death from doing so. Finally, in 1318, on the petition of Richard de Wardyngtone, perpetual vicar of the church of East Meon, it was augmented by John de Sendale, bishop of Winchester, who granted to the vicar and his successors for the bettering of the vicarage all small tithes of the parish of East Meon and chapelries annexed, viz. lambs, milk, cheese, calves, chickens, piglets, geese, eggs, mills, honey, hay, apples, pigeons, flax, and hemp. All other tithes he reserved to himself and his successors except tithes of wool from the chapelry of Westbury. (VCH)

Appendix 2. Village shops in Medieval Hampshire: the case of East Meon

Mark Page. Hampshire Field Club.

In the 13th and 14th centuries East Meon was a largely agricultural village without commercial pretensions. It did not possess a licensed weekly market, and its inhabitants were within a day's journey (reckoned at about 6 miles) of the market town of Petersfield. The village was, however, relatively isolated in hilly countryside on the edge of the South Downs, and it was the focus of a large parish containing numerous hamlets and farmsteads. Moreover, in the years around 1300 the medieval population was at its height. Thus the appearance of a shop in East Meon would not be entirely unexpected. In 1321 Thomas le Mason left to his wife Alice and his 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 Barrer[23].

A stall may originally have referred to a movable wooden trading booth for temporary use at different places, but by the 14th centuries many stalls ahd become semi-permanent structures which could be bought, sold and inherited types of property. The development of a temporary stall into a permanent shop was certainly suggested at East Meon where Peter le Mason's property next to the style of the churchyard was explicitly called a shop in 1339. In that year, Peter surrendered it to Richard le Ridler, who also planned to enlarge it by

[23] 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.

acquiring an additional 5 ft of ground on its south side, 4ft on its east side, and 3 ft on its north side. The shop's encroachment of ground on [*these*] sides suggests that it bordered the churchyard on its west side, and a building fitting that description is shown on late 19th century O/S maps.

The shop's location on the edge of the village is potentially significant. In the 12th century and probably before, unofficial markets were sometimes held when large numbers of people assembled at major churches to celebrate feast days and other significant occasions. These churchyard markets were unpopular with the church authorities, which tried to suppress them, but in many villages the churchyard provided the largest and most convenient public space for gatherings of local people for whom the church had become a focal point for both relivious and secular purposes. East Meon was the mother church to a large Anglo-Saxon parochia, and even in the 14th century the church still served a wide area; in 1327 the parish included places including Bordean, Coombe, Lanrgish, Oxenbourne , Riplington and Ramsdean[24]. Long before Peter le Mason's shop existed, the village churchyard must have been the site for regular comings and goings of people from a wide area, offering plentiful opportunity for the exchange of news, gossip, goods and services.

In 1321 Thomas le Mason left to his wife Alice and his 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 Barrer[25].

While medieval records demonstrate the existence of village shops, and tell us something about their size, location and ownership, they reveal little about their day to day use. What was bought and sold in this shop on the edge of East Meon churchyard? Did it offer a range of different goods and services, or was it more specialised? Was it open full-time or only part-time, perhaps when parishioners gathered at the church for specific religious events? Was it run by a professional shopkeeper, or by an agricultural tenant for howm it offered by-employment during slack times in the farming year? Were shops more often run by men or women, who might therefore supplement their houshold's main income from agriculture. If surnames are still any guide to occupations in the early 14th century, Richard le Ridler was a siever of sifter of corn, or possibly of sand and lime in making mortar, while Peter le Mason was a stonemworker. Were both these men involved in the building trade, and was the shop therefore the medieval equivalent of a builder's yard? Certainly there was a demand from the bishops of Winchester for builders to construct and maintain the episcopal resience and farm buildings at East Meon, and repairs to the barley barn and other structures were made in 1302[26]. Whatever the shop was used for – and sadly we will probably never know for sure – it reminds us that commerce and exchange extended deep into the medieval Hampshire countryside.

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[24] P.Mitchell-Fox and M Page (eds) *The Hampshire Tax List of 1327* 2014 pp 6 - 7

[25] 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.

[26] Roberts, Edward *'William of Wykeham's house at East Meon, Hants'* Archaeological Journal 150 (1993)