



**A SHORT GUIDE TO
ALL SAINTS' CHURCH
COMPTON
WINCHESTER**

HISTORY AND POINTS OF INTEREST

Anyone seeing the Church for the first time would notice, first, its comfortable position in its own small valley, and next its neat compactness in spite of a slightly irregular outline. There are two unequal naves and chancels and a large projecting vestry, but once you step inside the impression is of a completely harmonious building. You pass from a dark-roofed, shadowy space into the fuller light of the main body of the church and it is only after looking round a little that you recognise how skilful has been the blend of old and new.

Returning to the north door, it is worth re-entering the modern porch to look at the splendid zig-zag course that frames the inner arch. The original Norman ornament gives the due to the date and original appearance of the early church. Built no later than 1155, it was a simple oblong whose sides were the present north wall and a parallel one on the line of the arches which give onto the wider area to the south, and its ends the present west wall facing another where the altar stands; the north doorway was matched by one opposite in the south wall. A little light came in through two narrow round-headed slits, widely splayed inwards, set high in each of the longer walls and flanking the doors, another in the west wall and presumably several in the chancel; the two in the north wall, the one in the west and a single one in the south wall are still there. A glance at the south side of this last slit shows the remains of little hinges on which the small wooden shutter hung before the days of glass. The only other survival of the Norman church is the simple, sturdy twelfth-century font; the three bells date from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries.

The church so described stood and served Compton for 750 years with only minor changes in its fabric. The chancel was rebuilt and two thirteenth-century lancets were made in its north wall, one of them still showing the painting of a bishop, probably Thomas Becket, on its eastern splay, and another in the south wall; a new chancel arch was made c.1300, the present east window (not the glass) a few years later. A century or more later two more windows, both with two lights, were opened in the south wall, one in the chancel, and one in the nave, possibly to light a nave altar set against this wall; the same reason may explain the curious window added to the north wall below the eastern slit. Finally the large west window was made in the fifteenth-century, but much of its light was intercepted by a large wooden gallery later built across it, which is still remembered.

By 1905 this church was too small for the growing population of the parish, including Shawford, and the rector, C. H. H. Cooper, won general approval for a plan that had long been discussed, of adding a longer and wider nave and chancel to the south. The original south wall was replaced by an open arcade and itself rebuilt, with an extension east and west, on its present site, preserving the old south door and perpendicular window, and a piscina from the old church; the new chancel has a window from the old one in each of its walls immediately west of the altar. An organ replaced the harmonium that had served the old church, and a vestry was added. The roof of the new nave is higher than the old one, and there is a feeling of more light and space. But the sensitive work of the architects – two parishioners who gave their services free – has preserved the unity and intimacy of the whole building, perhaps most skilfully by linking the two chancels by a double arcade, where the sacrament is reserved between the two altars.

Several of the windows are interesting. One in the old chancel is a medley of fragments of mediaeval glass and that over the altar was given by Mrs Simeon, a granddaughter of Philip Williams, rector 1781-1830. In the new chancel the east window, showing Christ as the True Vine, with several saints, was the gift of James Pearson in 1906; another window commemorates members of the family of Charles Wickham, rector 1871-1902, whose own memorial is in a window in the south wall of the nave. In the same wall is a more modern piece of glazing, twin panels of the Mother and Child and a pieta, in memory of Edwin Utterton, rector 1940-1951. Notable inscriptions are, in the old chancel floor, those of the Harris family, whose arms include hedgehogs; the French word (*hérissons*) for these is said to allude to their name. Other Harris tablets are on the west wall; a Harris mentioned was Warden of Winchester College, 1630-1658; another Warden, 1789-1832, was George Huntingford, sometime curate of Compton, whose stone is also on the west wall. One of the most beautiful memorials is that of Philip Williams to his young wife Sarah, on the north wall at the west end of the new nave; she had identified herself with the parish and its interests and in one of her husband's many absences threatened to preach herself if he did not return in time for his Sunday duty. Philip himself and their daughter are commemorated on the north wall of the old church.

A very attractive piece of mediaeval sculpture looks into the baptistry from the north wall, an angel, almost individual enough to be a portrait, leaning forward to support a stone bracket.

The church contains some fine canvas embroidery. Mrs F C Little was for many years a parishioner and in the 1930s was one of the Winchester Cathedral Broderers led by Miss Louisa

Pesel and Miss Sybil Blunt; it was she and other parishioners who at that time worked the cushions on the seats of both chancels and on the sanctuary step of the new church. She also planned the designs and colouring of many of the 120 kneelers in the new church but unfortunately did not live to see them completed. After Mrs Little became ill, Mrs G. L. Whitaker, who had been assisting her, brought the project to its conclusion with the valuable help of Miss D. I. Eden. This enterprise, started in 1972 and completed in August 1975, represents the devoted work of some fifty parishioners and friends; the initials on each kneeler commemorate former members of the parish or friends and relatives of the donors. At the time of her death Mrs Little was working on the kneeler in the Rector's stall; this was finished by Miss Eden, who also worked the matching one in the stall opposite.

The parish registers begin only in 1673, well over a century after they should. As well as listing births, marriages and deaths they contain some interesting notes: records of subscriptions, e.g. towards rebuilding St Paul's Cathedral after the fire, frequent references to buryings in woollen, as required by law, and homely details such as that Matthew Endering, Gent (57), was on 20 April 1789 "buried under ye second flat oblong stone as you go up ye isle".

Rectors of Compton and Otterbourne

Before	1288	Hugh de Lavington
	1288	Henry de Simplingham
	1289	William de Essex
	1304	John de Bloyou
	1305	Oger de Kernicke
	1315	William de Bloyou
	1316	William de Staunforde
	1317	William de Farnham
	1329	Robert Parson
c1337		William Galfrid Graspays
c1340		William de Meon
	1347	Nicholas de Winton
	1349	John Loke (or Lok)
	1349	Richard Habbegod
	135	John de Kimberlee
	1357	Hugh de Morton
	1361	John de Wormenhale
	1361	Michael Dunkeved
	1372	John Stauntone
	1375	Thomas Tynny (William Gratell or Grateley)
	1411	William Ruddok
	?	John Cranburne
	1466?	John Boucher (alias Cooke)
	1469?	Walter Dyar <i>Thomas Aphorpe</i> <i>Brian Holme</i>
Before	1493	Richard Maker
	1493	William Eades
	?	William Cadow (or Cadew) <i>(John Johnson, parish priest)</i>
	1517?	David Sybald
	1534	William Philpott
	1536	Anthony Johannes Barker
	1551	John Erle
	1559	John Coxe
	1560	David Padye
	1562	Thomas Odill
	1566	Edward Walker
	1574	Robert Raynolds

1595	John Harmer
1613	Abraham Browne
1627	James Wedderburn became Bishop of Dunblane in 1636
1636	John Ramsey
1636	Thomas Hackett
1661	John Holloway
1662	James Moorcroft
1667	William Burt
1677	John Barton
1683	John Webb
1721	John Thistlethwaite
1724	Charles Scott
1763	John Mitchell
1765	Robert Shipman
1775	Newton Ogle
1776	Thomas Rickman
1781	Philip Williams
1831	John Old Zillwood
1871	Charles Wickham
1902	Aldred Howarth Blake
1904	Cecil Henry Hamilton Cooper
1909	Charles Rowlandson Durham
1917	John Charles Blackett
1928	Philip Cunningham
1940	Edwin Ernest Sumner Utterton
1951	Henry Marshall John Burdett
1958	Edward George Dalton Fawkes
1973	Nigel John Ovenden

Rectors of Compton and Otterbourne

1987	Philip Leslie Sibborn Barrett
1999	Edward John Widdows
2003	Paul Drummond Baird (Priest-in-Charge)

Rectors of Compton, Hursley and Otterbourne

2008	William Alan Prescott
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Names in italics are doubtful