

‘Rediscovering our Parish Churches’ English Heritage and the Diocese of Salisbury Partnership Project

Part One: Historical, Architectural and Archaeological Review

Kilmington, St Mary

- 1.1 *Deanery:* Heytesbury 1.2 *Civil parish:* Kilmington
- 1.3 *Church address:* Church Road, Kilmington, Wiltshire, BA12 6RD
- 1.4 *Grid reference:* ST7719736593
- 1.5 *Listing grade:* Grade II* 1.6 *Scheduled ancient monument:* No
(Listing descriptions appended in section 7)
- 1.7 *Is the church in a conservation area?* Yes.
- 1.8 *Does the church stand in a churchyard?* Yes.
- 1.9 *Date of visit:* 9 October, 2008 1.10 *Report by:* Martin Cherry
- 1.11 *Contact made on site:* Richard Tyler
- 1.12 *Sources consulted:* Incorporated Church Building Society, Lambeth Palace Library, files 6746 (1868 rebuilding); 10652 (tower repairs, 1906); Wilts & Swindon Archives, 2063/11, 21, 56 (various). Nikolaus Pevsner & Bridget Cherry, *The Buildings of England: Wiltshire* (Harmondsworth, 1975), p. 281. *Kelly’s Directory of Wiltshire* (London, 1935), p. 129. Anon, typescript notes on the church, n.d.

2. A STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St Mary’s, Kilmington, is distinguished by a fine early-15th century tower that forms one of the outliers of the ‘Somerset’ type. ‘Somerset towers’ are an exceptional flowering of late-medieval English architecture, notable for their height and lightness and well-judged decoration. Almost all of the rest of the church was rebuilt in the 1860s to designs by James Piers St Aubyn (1815-95). He was a Cornishman and designed a number of excellent churches in the West Country, many showing considerable sensitivity to local tradition, others displaying great ability in the handling of large spaces and rich materials. His aristocratic family connections held him in good stead and he served for more than thirty years as surveyor to the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple.

3. THE BUILDING: ITS HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, SETTING AND CONTENTS

Listing and Sites & Monuments descriptions appended? Yes.

Listing: Yes SAM: N/A

3.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Rev. Mark Warburton, rector of Kilmington from 1866, had good connections (he was domestic chaplain to the earl of Mansfield) and plenty of money. He rebuilt the chancel before he was installed and contributed £500 to the costs of the restoration of the rest of the church in 1868-9 (the total estimate was £1,032 10s.). This increased the seating from 125 to 191 and, whereas beforehand 80 seats were appropriated, after the restoration all the seats were free. He provided 20 seats for children who were placed in front of the reading desk – these seats, remarkably, still survive. And, before the days of induction loops, he made special provision for ‘sundry old people who are infirm and deaf [having] lately set apart certain seats in the chancel [for them]’.

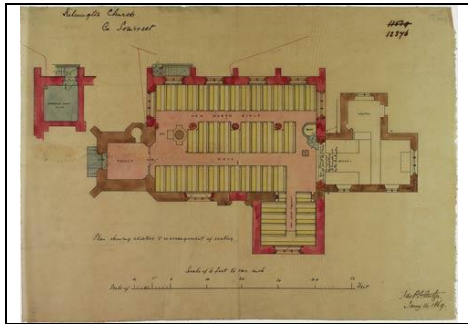
3.2 THE CHURCH AND ITS PRINCIPAL FITTINGS AND FURNISHINGS

3.2.1 *Building materials.* Dressed limestone, rubble stone, tiled roof with ceramic ridge cresting and coped verges.

3.2.2 *Name(s) of architect(s), builder(s), patron(s) where known.* The names of the masons responsible for the medieval west tower have not come down to us but tradition has it that the patron was Sir Richard Bray and the date 1420. The architect of the major restorations of 1863-4 and 1868-9 was J.P. St Aubyn of London. The incumbent, the Rev. Mark Warburton, provided the initiative and a substantial part of the costs. C.E. Ponting (architect) restored the tower in 1906 using Hoskins Brothers of Newbury as contractor. An application for a grant was made to re-roof the south aisle (transept) in 1907 but there is no evidence that this was done.

3.2.3 *Plan form, principal construction phases and architectural features.* West tower and entrance, nave and north aisle, south transept, north vestry and chancel.

1. *The medieval church.* The tower is a good example of the elaborate type that was popular in Somerset – Kilmington was originally in that county – with pierced decorative battlements and elongated belfry openings, the pinnacles growing out of the buttresses to make a very coherent overall design: it is the most important feature of the church. The 1869 plan by St Aubyn (below) shows that the medieval masonry of the south wall of the nave and the 14th-century arch into the south chapel/transept (shown in brown) was retained from the old church; the chancel (also in brown) had already been rebuilt in 1863-4.



2. *The 19th-century church.* The major restoration, really a virtual rebuilding of the body of the church, was carried out in two bites. Even before he became rector (1866), Warburton rebuilt the chancel and vestry in 1863-4 in the Decorated revival style (guidebook in church). Then, he rebuilt the rest of the church in 1868-9 in the Perpendicular revival style. This

involved demolishing the old Hartgill chapel that had formed the north transept (visible in the early photograph at the head of this report) and building a new north aisle. St Aubyn rebuilt the south transept (perhaps re-using medieval masonry) for additional seating; it now serves as the organ chamber. A tablet records the 1906 restoration by Ponting of the tower, which was in danger of falling.

3.2.4 *Principal furnishings, fittings and decorations.* The 19th-century furnishings are simple and decent, typical of their date. The choir stalls retain their moveable front benches for children (see 3.1.). The most striking feature inside the church (other than the glass) is the pulpit: a tablet records that it was erected in 1911, made up from old pieces – it is something of a *tour de force*, made up of 17th and 18th century bits but looking quite unlike anything that would have been made at that time. The tower screen is by Ponting, 1895. *Glass.* Two windows of note: the east window, a brilliantly coloured Crucifixion given in 1878; and the north aisle east window erected 1869, commemorating the grisly murder of John and William Hartgill, stewards to the perpetrator, Lord Stourton, who was hanged in 1558.

Other features are itemised in the list description.

3.2.5 *Suggested corrections or additions to an existing listing description.* The list description is sufficiently full and adequate.

3.3 LISTED STATUS

3.3.1 *Is it judged to be appropriate?* Yes. 3.3.2 *If not, suggestion.*

3.4 SETTING, CHURCHYARD, ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND GREENSPACE/WILDLIFE POTENTIAL

3.4.1 *Setting.* The approach to St Mary's church from the south is delightful, flanked by the listed manor house amid mature trees. It is also in this section of the churchyard that the most attractive memorials are grouped.

3.4.2 *Burials in the churchyard?* Yes. 3.4.3 *Still open for burials?* Yes.

3.4.4 *Archaeological significance/potential?* The churchyard has been used for burials since medieval times. This and the fact that the manor house stands so close to the church indicates that the southern part of the churchyard especially will be archaeologically sensitive.

3.4.5 *Green space/refuge for wildlife?* The churchyard is in a deeply rural setting; the grass is mown twice a month and there is no nature conservancy programme.

3.4.6 *War memorial?* No.

4. CURRENT USE AND FUTURE MANAGEMENT

4.1 CONDITION

4.1.1 *Is the church in poor/fair/good condition?* Good.

4.1.2 *Date of last Quinquennial Inspection Report.* January 2005.

4.1.3 *What significant works did it propose?* There is serious movement of the tower parapet that requires attention: this together with tower roof repairs will cost around £40,000 (2005 figures).

4.1.4 *Work carried out since last QIR?* A legacy has enabled a complete overhaul of the church lighting to take place. This has transformed the interior, which now looks beautiful when fully lit.

4.1.5 *Work planned during the present quinquennium.* Raising funding for the tower repairs is the high priority.

4.1.6 *Summary of what works identified in the last QIR not carried out not carried out (and if possible explain why).* N/A

4.2 AMENITIES, ACCESSIBILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

4.2.1 *Does the congregation have access to all amenities that they require?* There is no demand for improved facilities.
Are these available in the church itself or in another nearby building? No.

4.2.2 *If not, plans to introduce them?* No.
Impact on the church fabric? N/A

4.2.3 *Is the church accessible?* Yes.

4.2.4 *Has a disability audit been carried out?* No.

4.2.5 *have any measures been taken to provide facilities for the disabled and are any planned?* No, but the need for this is recognised. The QIR indicates that very little is necessary other than to provide a ramp. There is a sound reinforcement system.

4.2.6 *Environmental footprint. Has an audit been carried out?* No, but the need for this is recognised.
Measures implemented? The new lighting (4.1.4) is far less energy consuming than the old system.
Measures planned? None.

5. THE IMPACT OF CHANGE

There are no proposals for reordering or new facilities. The interior of the church is essentially from the 19th-century rebuilding and the seating is contemporary and fits the building well. It is of good craftsmanship and will provide many more years of good service. Some rows of seating have been removed and there is scope for further reordering if the future viability of the church requires it.

6. CATEGORISATION OF ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE 3

- **Category 1:** Churches of outstanding significance and limited adaptability for uses other than worship, with fabric and/or furnishings that should be protected from all but the most modest changes.
- **Category 2:** Churches of high significance that could nonetheless tolerate adaptive change if carefully and sympathetically managed.
- **Category 3:** Churches of significance, but with scope for more extensive alteration or adaptation in the interests of securing a sustainable future.
- **Category 4:** Churches of little architectural or historical significance. Many of these buildings serve their parishes very well and to describe them as being of little architectural or historic interest does not deny the contribution they might make in pastoral terms.

7. LISTING DESCRIPTION

C15 tower, chancel rebuilt 1864, complete rebuilding 1869, tower restored 1903 by C.E. Ponting. Dressed limestone, rubblestone, tiled roof with ceramic ridge cresting and coped verges. West tower and entrance, nave and north aisle, south transept, north vestry and chancel. Narrow 3-stage tower of Somerset type with diagonal buttresses and string courses, moulded Tudor-arched west doorway with hoodmould, 4-light Perpendicular window over, bellstage has 2-light pointed Perpendicular windows with pierced decorative louvres, 2-light north window to middle stage and south side has two crocketed image niches with statues of the Virgin and Gabriel, buttresses are carried up to crocketed corner pinnacles of battlemented parapet. Nave has 3-light C19 window to south side. C19 gabled south transept has 3-light Perpendicular-style window to south, reset stone sundial. Chancel in geometric Decorated style has two 2-light windows to south and 3-light east window, pedimented tablet to Edward Wagstaff died 1795 attached to north wall, north vestry with planked pointed door and 2-light window. Large north aisle with 3-light Perpendicular west and east windows, four 2-light north windows. North side of tower has polygonal stair turret with chamfered arrowloops. Interior: porch below tower has chamfered Tudor-arched doorway to stairs, continuously double chamfered tower arch with 1903 glazed screen, plaque on wall records restoration, four achievements of arms. Nave has C19 roof of eight unequal bays, arch-braced collar trusses with curved wind-bracing to exposed rafters and purlins, polychrome tiled floor. Four-bay north aisle arcade in C14 style with octagonal piers and moulded arches. Organ chamber in south transept; double chamfered continuous arch, possibly C15. C19 chancel arch in C13 style, 3-bay arch-braced collar truss roof, partly blocked pointed archway to north vestry, small piscina in south west window sill. Fittings: C17 polygonal pulpit with richly carved panels, reset on C19 limestone plinth, C19 octagonal stone font at west end of nave, C19 pews. Stained glass in east window to Anne Warburton c.1878, north aisle east window glass to Hartgill family c.1869. Monuments include slate tablet in transept to Rebecca Combe died 1644 with good lettering, Edwardian baroque cartouche with heraldic arms to Georgii Gulielmi

Camborne (sic) died 1906, classical marbles to Joseph Lush died 1827, oval tablet to Joseph Lush died 1797, classical marble recording charity to Wesleyan Chapel; John Hooper died 1894. (Kelly's Directory, Wiltshire, 1903).