Part 2

A Tour Around St Andrew's Church



Photo by Mike Bedingfield



Inside the Church

The Porch

Inside the entrance of the porch, on the left, a flight of stairs leads to a chamber added in 1825. Prior to this date there may have been a priest's chamber above the porch. The small doorway gave access to a Palm Sunday gallery, from which branches were strewn during the great Palm Sunday processions of centuries past.



The carved stone – base ca 30cm. Courtesy of the late Keith Gardner.

In the 1970s, according to the late Keith Gardner, the carved stone (dragon?) shown in the photograph above was in the porch but has since been lost.

The wonderful finely carved 15th century inner door still has its ancient doorway.



Right – The inner door. Photo by John Wilcox. The right hand arch of the doorway contains the feature shown on the right. Is it a representation of a wheel of fortune or zodiac?







The outside of the ancient wooden door contains various markings including a carpenter's mason mark as illustrated above and below.



Left: An impressive large wooden-framed lock can be seen inside the door.

The Font and Tower Screen

The font is at the west end of the nave. The Norman bucket shaped bowl has cable mouldings, and is on a 13^{th} century base with four Blue Lias shafts. These shafts mirror the Early English pillars of the north aisle. The same design is seen at the base of the pulpit and double piscina mentioned later in this guide. The 17^{th} century wooden font cover is in the form of a spire.





Left— the font in 2013.

Right—a photo taken by Amelia E Gimingham on May 19th 1892. Courtesy of Congresbury History Group.

To the west beyond the font is the tower screen, the doors of which belonged to the rood screen. The tower screen was glazed and extended into the arch in 1949. The glazed part contains the inscription. *"To the glory of God and in loving memory of their mother and father Francis Harriet and Walter Edwin Gardner this screen was improved by EHH and WLG November 6th 1949."*

North Aisle

The 13th century north arcade of Bath stone has unusual piers of four attached shafts with chamfered angles between. Both capitals and arches are moulded. About half way up these arches are four corbels. From west to east, these two figures.









Photo by John Wilcox



6

More Figures.

Just under the roofline and lining both sides of the north aisle are 12 figures thought to date to the $15^{\rm th}$ century.





Close ups of three figures. Photos by John Wilcox.

A list of the incumbents at St Andrew's from 1228 to the present day is shown on a board towards the west end on the north wall.

The square panes within the perpendicular style window, to the left of the north door and the west window, contain some old Nailsea glass. Nailsea glass has a green tinge. Also to the left of the north door are two plaques. One to Anne Knowles, who died in 1835, the other to is a brass plaque to Thomas George Simmons five years churchwarden and 14 years Secretary of the Parochial Church Council, who died in 1939.





Towards the east is a memorial to two victims of the Boar War. Private John Blackmore of the Somerset Light Infantry who died aged 20 on 9th June 1902 at Newcastle, Natal, South Africa and Private Henry "Harry" Petheram of the 13th Hussars who died aged 23 on 1st January 1901 of disease at Standerton, South Africa.

S.BALL A.Colson D.N.Colson: E.Edwards	L EDWARDS HFISHER L,FISHER F M GILL	- 1918 O.D.M.Garsia H.Kingcott P.Payne E.J.Reakes	A P S SPICER A G SIMMOND L G SIMMOND H F WEAR
B CALLENDER. V CROOK.	1939 H.Foster N.Harvey	- 1945 P Miles A Richards	J.SAWTELL

A brass war memorial and standards of the Royal British Legion are also further to the east, on this wall. Further again to the east are two doorways one beneath the other, and an angel corbel, all associated with the rood described later in this guide.



The two doors and angel corbel (beside the flag). Photo by John Wilcox.

The Nave

The clerestory windows above the arches, which have two windows to each bay, are said by Pevesner to be reminiscent of East Anglia and perhaps date to the period 1320-50.

William Bitton

Facing the nave at the top of the windows and supporting the roof timbers are particularly interesting stone corbels. 18 little red and green figures are shown to be suffering from such things as tooth ache and headache. They are believed to commemorate William of Bitton II, Bishop of Bath and Wells 1267-74, (Also known as William Button), who in the early 1250s was also vicar of Congresbury. William generated a posthumous cult as a healer of such ailments. The corbels are said to be original and painted in their medieval colours.



Green Men

The ribs in the wagon roof were renewed in 1951-2, when the 15th century square bosses, incorporating seven "green men," were cleaned and restored to the roof.







and number 7 at the west end.

Number 1 is at the east of the church

7

Green men photos by Mike Bedingfield.



Each carved face is different.

Number 3 viewed from a different angle. Does this reveal another face with its mouth above the smaller face?



An early photograph showing the oil lamps. Courtesy of Congresbury History Group.

In 1880 the old pews of the nave and aisles were removed and replaced by the present ones. Remains of the bases which once supported oil lamps can be still seen in some pews. The whole church was repaired and re-floored at about the same time.

Rood Screen

The 15th century oak screen (much reconstructed), separating the nave from the chancel, has one light divisions, and a finely decorated three-band cornice.

Its design is based on a grape vine as a reminder of the words Jesus spoke to his disciples: "*I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remain in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing.*" John 15:5



The screen decorated for the Jubilee June 2012.



Photo by John Wilcox.

Facing the altar, a close examination of the top right of the screen reveals a delightful small carved figure entwined in the grape vines.

The actual rood (an image of Christ on the cross) was probably, until the Reformation, supported on a beam which rested on the 14th century head corbels about half way up the chancel arch.



14thcentury heads.



In front of this beam a rood loft (a wooden platform, or gallery) was used on festival days for the reading of the epistle and the gospel, and to accommodate the choir. This was supported by a beam which stretched across the body of the church. On the north wall is a small doorway below the outline of another. The upper doorway led out into the rood loft, and was reached via a spiral staircase from the lower door. Stone corbels in the form of angels, in between the two doorways and by the window on the south wall supported the beam under the rood loft.



The stone angels. The one on the left reads "And al.y.v: This chyrche be." And the right "God spc:thc'." What does this mean?



The Eagle



To mark Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1887 a public subscription raised £40 for a brass eagle lectern to be placed in the church. An eagle is the most common form of lectern, its outstretched wings symbolise the Gospel being carried all over the world.



On the floor in front of the screen were two carved pieces of stone, one fan-shaped and the other hexagonal; these were taken from the north aisle chapel. Only the one in the photo on the right remains. The pulpit was presented in 1856 by Joseph Haythorne, then vicar.

Photo, by John Wilcox, of the pulpit dressed for the 2014 harvest festival.





The litany desk by the pulpit is in memory of Prebendary Alexander Cran M. A. vicar of St Andrew's Congresbury from 1948 to 1973 and of his wife Kathleen Mary.





The vestry minutes record

" *Be it remembered that in October 1917 Mr & Mrs T G Simmonds of The Hill Congresbury placed in the church a carved oak Litany Desk and Litany Book in memory of their 2 sons and only children who lost their lives through the Great War 1914-18."* Lionel Gundry Simmonds was killed at St Eloi, Belgium, in 1916 aged 23 and is buried in Belgium. His brother, Austin Gundry Simmonds, was accidentally drowned in Lough Ree, Ireland in 1917 aged 19 and is buried in Cornamagh Cemetery, Ireland.

Former Chapel of St Katherine's (later called the Lady Chapel)

Pevsner refers to indications of the 13th century building and cites the east window of this chapel which has reticulated tracery.



East window with reticulated tracery (A net like pattern of tracery characteristic of the early 14th century).

The chapel in mentioned in several medieval wills. William Congresbury, former rector of St Werburgh, Bristol in his will dated 29th August 1411 bequeathed as follows: "*Item to the lights of St Katherine, St Nicholas and St Congar in the same church 18d in equal portion."*

In a will made the Sunday after Christmas 1415, John Venables requested to be buried "*in the chapel of St Katherine next the chancel of the church of Congresbury.*"

Wall paintings showing the outline of figures were said to have been found in this chapel and under the floor a carved head was discovered during the 1950s renovations.



The carved head. The style suggests she is from the 15th century.



Graffiti on the chapel's east wall.

Hidden by the large organ pipes and very difficult to see with the naked eye are four corbels.





A close up of three of the corbels minus cobwebs! Photos by John Wilcox.

In the churchwarden's account for 1855 a Mr Woolly is shown as being paid £5 for playing the organ. The current organ, probably the one installed in 1876, now fills this chapel. Formally it stood by the north - west wall. Prior to its removal the chapel had been kept as a memorial to the Dickenson family.

In 1924 the organ was cleaned and overhauled for the sum of forty-nine pounds, seventeen shillings and sixpence (£49 87p), including the altering of the blowing handle position. The organ pipes were rebuilt, made electrically powered and the key board console moved to the south wall in 1967.

According to an article in the parish magazine for February 1949 the organ screen came from St Augustine the Less, Bristol. (demolished in 1962). The screen on its south side contains a brass plaque with the inscription:

THE ELECTRIC BLOWER IN THIS ORGAN WAS INSTALLED BY PARISHIONERS AND FRIENDS IN MEMORY OF OLIVER POULTNEY, A FAITHFULL FRIEND OF THIS CHURCH. BORN 1852 – DIED 1932.

The Chancel and Sanctuary

The painted wooden roof of the chancel is said to date from the mid-nineteenth century and the floral designs include stars over the sanctuary.

The communion table in the sanctuary is the focal point of the church; where in response to Our Lord's command "*Do this in remembrance of Me*" the service of holy communion is celebrated. The theme of the communion rail kneeler is unity; the unity of God, the church and man. The design is linked throughout with a brown thread in a Celtic design, uniting the flowers and the symbols. The flowers depicting the arts are from the works of Shakespeare. St Andrew's cross is repeated in the pattern, as is God the Holy Spirit in the dove, and the Holy Trinity in the three fishes. In the centre is "Christ the King" a symbol of the Chi Rho and crown. On either side is an original monogram of the letters UNITY with the I and T forming a cross.



Left: Unity represented on the communion rail kneeler.



The double piscina in the sanctuary.

On the south wall of the sanctuary is an unusual and elaborate double piscina dating to the period c 1190-1250. The piscina is a basin for washing mass vessels, provided with a drain. Piscinas with two bowls allowed the priest to wash his hands in one bowl and the vessels in another.



Window above the piscina.

Above the piscina is a window in the Decorated style of the fourteenth century.

The lower lights depict the four patron saints of the British Isles: St George, St Andrew, St Patrick and St David.

There are the burial chambers beneath the floor of the chancel and the former St Katherine's Chapel; their date is uncertain.

The East Window



East Window

The tracery at the top of this fine Perpendicular style (Late 14th to early 15th century) window contains fragments of delicately coloured 15th century glass. Note the contrast with the stronger colours of the Victorian glass of the five main lights of the window. The Victorian glass (1889 by Bell & Son) was repositioned in 1958.

The three centre lights depict St Andrew bringing the boy with the loaves and fishes to Our Lord before the miraculous feeding of the five thousand. The light on the left depicts Andrew with Jesus and John the Baptist; Andrew was a follower of John before he became an Apostle. The right hand light depicts Andrew with his brother Peter kneeling before Jesus. Thus, there is a theme of `bringing'; John the Baptist bringing Andrew to Jesus, Andrew bringing Peter, and Andrew bringing the boy with the loaves and fishes.

The clear "sky" above the heads of the figures was originally at the base of the window where it was hidden by a reredos (the backing for the communion table). After removal of the reredos, during the restoration work of the early nineteen fifties, the glass was removed from the window and replaced, with the figures lowered to their present position, and the `sky' glass placed above them.



The two chairs in the chancel were presented to the church in June 1912 by Mrs Basil Vaughan Powell, in memory of her sister, Alice Hare, Baroness Truro.

Photo by John Wilcox.



An excellent illustration of change to the church can be seen above. The photographs on the left above and below probably date to about 1890 and show a reredos and, either side of the altar, what seems to be two large niches for statues.

The photo on the right above was taken in 2014. The reredos and niches are gone, This current photo also shows the east window changes previously described.







Memorial tablets in the chancel.

In Memory of MARY. religt of RICHARD MOGG F.fg Hest Son of JACOB MOGG of High Livicion. this Country Efg vho died Aged 47

Merle Chapel

The Merle chapel was, until 1952, a private chapel attached to the manor of Iwood in the ownership of the Norman and the Richardson families. In 1880 it was restored by Ann de Merle

of a Huguenot branch of the Norman family (hence the four French saints on the east window).

Merle chapel east window.



Two biblical scenes, the sower and the faithful servant, are depicted in the upper section. Below from left to right are depicted, St Louis, a thirteenth century King of France; St Denis, Patron Saint of France (who, as the glass illustrates, was beheaded by the Roman Governor of Paris in 275), St Remigius, sixth century `Apostle of the Franks' and St Vincent of Lerins, a fifth century monk.

A plaque in the chapel reads:

"This candelabrum commemorates Wilfred Laurier Cleverdon obit 8th March 1968 churchwarden and generous friend of this church."



The white marble tablet to the memory of Mary Merle on the east wall of the chapel. The prettily painted ceiling probably dates from the 1880s, but the corbels under the roof line are said to be of the 15^{th} century.



Merle chapel ceiling.



The Merle chapel corbels. Photos by John Wilcox.



The south window of the chapel depicts the transfiguration of Jesus.

In 1982 the communion rail and kneeler were added as part of a general restoration of the chapel. The latter incorporates designs from the Mary Merle memorial tablet on the east wall. These signify the phases of life: birth (chrysalis); youth (snowdrop); marriage (orange blossom); death (broken poppy) and resurrection (butterfly). The kneeler design includes the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet (Alpha and Omega) signifying that Jesus is the beginning and end of all things, a lily the symbol for Mary and two magpies for joy. Wild roses link the design to those on the screens of the chapel. The word merle means blackbird in French which explains another motif in the kneeler.

Windows and screens also carry designs of the coats of arms of the families connected with the chapel.

In the south wall are a single 14th century piscina and an arched recess. This recess may have marked the site of the tomb of the church's founder and indeed this chapel was once called the chapel of St Congar. An alternative is that this recess was an Easter Sepulchre, where the blessed sacrament was kept from Good Friday to Easter Sunday, although they were usually sited within or against the north wall of a chancel.



Arched recess in the Merle chapel with (left) the single piscina.

The parclose (screen separating the Merle chapel and south aisle) is 15th century but much altered. On its eastern side a wooden seat of some age is built into the screen. It is said to have been undisturbed by the 1880s restoration and once faced the site of the former altar.



The wooden seat built into the screen. Photo by John Wilcox.

South Aisle

The 13th century arches of the south aisle contain only the bases of the 13th century shafts. Purely decorative Purbeck marble shafts were added in 1856 and mimic the Early English style and complement the north pillars opposite.

Just under the roofline and lining both sides of the south aisle are a further 12 figures which are thought to date to the 15^{th} century.











Three close ups. Photos by John Wilcox.



War Memorial Windows



The windows representing, from left to right, the Navy, Royal Air Force and Army.

The three stained glass windows on the south wall were placed as a war memorial in 1949. The three armed services are represented as illustrated above. The lines at the bottom panel of the RAF window (see below) were composed by Eleanor Lutley, wife of a former vicar of St Anne's, Hewish.











Details from the windows.



Near the Merle chapel is a litany desk and seat in memory of Charles Porter, vicar from 1923 to 1928 and his wife Blanche Evelyn Mary Porter, whose remains are interred near the south porch.



Memorial to Hester Richardson on the south aisle wall.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF JOHN FLETCHER CARLYLE, Who fell fighting in Gallipoli in August 1915. When with New Zealand forces.

Sacred to the Memory of JOHN WALL of Brinsey in this Parish, who departed this life January 19th 1821, Aged 68 Years. Also of MARY, his Wife who died April 16th 1832. Aged 36 Years.

Likewise of WILLIAM and EDWIN their grandchildren, the infant Sons of WILLIAM and MARY ANN WALL, of London.

This Monument was creeted by WILLIAM WALL, from duty and affection to the best of Parents and parernal love to his children.

> In Memory of WILLIAM WALL. of Grosbenor Lodge, Highgate. died May 79 1861, aged 81 years. And of MARY ANN his widew, died February 4th 1870, aged 79 years. Also of THOMAS TABOR eldest son, died May 18th 1864, aged 49 years. And of MARY ANN TABOR eldest daughter, died August 4th 1875, aged 55 years. ALL THE ABOVE LIE BURIED IN HIGHGATE CEMETERY, LONDON. Also of PHILIP WILLIAM youngest son, died August 29th 1904, aged si years. ALSO BURIED IN HIGHGATE CEMETERY.

Memorials on the south aisle wall.

The Children's Window



Above the area reserved mainly for young children to the west of the church is a stained glass window, dated 1971, which shows Jesus surrounded by young children. A nearby brass plaque records:

"THIS CHILDREN'S WINDOW WAS GIVEN BY THE PARENTS OF MICHAEL RICKARDS WHO DIED 18TH SEPTEMBER 1969 AGED 4 1/2 YEARS." In the parish magazine for 1949 is an extract of notes compiled by Mr H. F. Jarvis, from notes by the late Mr T. G. Simmonds, which seem to refer to the table now by the south door and states that it was probably the original Holy Table. The extract continues

"This table has had a somewhat chequered career. It was sold amongst the effects of Dr. Hunt and bought by Col. Wm. Long, being in use for some time in his home. After his death it was re-polished and presented to the Church in memory of Col. and Mrs. Long by their children on the condition and understanding that it should be restored to its proper use in a side chapel."



Photo by John Wilcox

The table (it appears to be Jacobean) shown above is now by the south door and bears the following plaque.


Before we leave the church note the book of remembrance, which is in a cabinet containing a plaque with the inscription: "*In memory of Vidi and Cynthia Graham.*"



The book of remembrance.

A Tour Around the Outside of St Andrew's Church





The 13th century north door with its large roll moulding, decorated for a wedding in 2008.

The north door is one of the original parts of the church consecrated in 1215 but re-sited following construction of the north aisle. Careful examination reveals a number of interesting carved features on the stone surround.



Features around the north door.



Blocked up windows and doorway indicated by arrows.



Close up of a blocked doorway.

The church has changed considerably over the years as evidenced by the blocked features towards the east side on the north of the church.

Outside South

The South Porch



Colonnettes (small column or shaft) of which the moulded capitals remain

The outer doorway was probably once the inner door. Pevsner refers to its 13th century features:

"colonnettes of which the moulded capitals remain, double chamfered arch, and a hood mould on stiff-leaf stops."

Scratch Dials

On the east side of the outer doorway are the remains of ancient scratch dials (or Mass dials), a particularly clear example being about half way up the edge of the doorway. These lines were used to indicate the hours of observance of the church services before the days of clocks. They are probably very early, and may date from the building of the porch in the thirteenth century.

On the left of the same door are the mass dials shown on the next page in the location indicated by the arrows.



Mass dials on the south porch.

The mass dial shown top left above is to the right of the south porch entrance door. A metal rod has been inserted in the centre of this dial in place of the gnomon (the part of the mass dial which cast the shadow). A possible small mass dial, shown above top right, is situated below the larger dial. Inside the arch and to the left of these dials are two further circles carved in the stone, which may be possible dials. On the left of the same door are the mass dials shown in the bottom three pictures as indicated by the arrows.

Fragments of lime-wash remain on the stone to the left and right of the doorway. Lime-wash was often used on churches to protect the stonework and give the church an attractive white finish. A carved cross to the right of the porch door is probably a consecration cross. Circular features above this cross are difficult to interpret. Are they the remains of unfinished sun dials?



The features to the right of the porch door.

The Tower

The fifteenth century tower (restored in 1951) is earlier than most of the church towers in Somerset. It is one of the few in the area surmounted by a spire. The spire is decorated with bands and the whole structure rises to a height of 37 metres (120 feet). On top of the spire is a gilded weather-vane, the design of which recalls Peter's denials of Christ: "*before the cock crows twice, you will deny Me three times.*"

On the east face of the tower is a clock, presented by a Mrs Elizabeth Mease in September 1843. In 1903 it was restored by Perret & Joyner. Hand winding gave way to electricity in 1968. Smiths of Derby overhauled the clock in 1991 and a further overhaul and repair was carried out in May 2013.



Mrs Mease's clock.



Spire and weather vane.

The Bells (fourth heaviest peal of eight in the world).

Number	Inscription	Founder	Diameter	Weight
1	Rev R. H Maunsell Eyre M.A. Vicar J.H. Walter, G Cavill, Churchwardens, 1910	Llewellins & James, Bristol.	33 1/2 inches	8cwt
2	Rev R. H Maunsell Eyre M.A. Vicar J.H. Walter, G Cavill, Churchwardens, 1910	Llewellins & James, Bristol.	35 inches	8 ½ cwt
3	William Jones & Mr Thomas Oszen. 1754 TB.	Thomas Bilbie	36 1/2 inches	10cwt
4	Anno Domini 1606. GP.IW.HN	George Purdue	36 3/4 inches	12 cwt
5	Anno Domini 1606. GP	George Purdue	41 inches	15cwt
6	Anno Domini 1606. GP.HN. IW	George Purdue	43 ³ ⁄ ₄ inches	18 cwt
7	Come when I cale to serve God all 1621 RP	Roger Purdue	49 1/4 inches	25 cwt
8	Mr William Jones and Thomas Oszen Churchwardens. Thomas Bilbie fecit 1754. Hear me Oh hear when I cry prepare to live prepare to dye	Thomas Bilbie	57 1/2 inches	34 cwt 4 lbs

The 7^{th} bell is tuned to D and the 8^{th} to C.

St Andrew's eight bells span the years 1606-1910. They are the fourth heaviest peal of eight in the world after Sherborne Dorset (46cwt), Adelaide Australia (41cwt) and Westbury Wiltshire (35cwt).

The bells were mounted in a wooden frame, dated 1624, which was replaced by Llewellins and James in 1903. Mr E Standen, a bell ringer for many years, wrote in the parish magazine of July 1957:

"In 1904 the bells were rehung by Llewellins and James, of Bristol, in iron frames, mounted on steel girders. With bell pits for the new treble and second. The old bell frames in oak, were dated 1624, and I well remember looking with awe, and that date, and wondering what kind of men they were, whose work has stood so many years." The new frame is in two tiers.

In 1910 Llewellins & James cast and added the 1st and 2nd bells, which completed the ring of eight. A new floor was constructed in 1965 in the tower and this is now the ringing chamber. The previous ringing chamber on the ground floor in now the vestry. Jim Taylor and Ron Ballam fitted new pulley blocks on the rope guides in 1971.

The steel frame was restored and strengthened in 1981 when the clappers were also removed and refurbished and the tenor clapper replaced. In 2004 the 3rd bell was re-hung and sealed bearings fitted by Whites of Appleton.

The 4th, 5th and 6th bells were re-hung in 2010 with sealed bearings. Only the lower tier of bells now requires hand lubrication.



Muffled bells on 2 Feb 1901 following the death of Queen Victoria.



The bell ringers June 2012. Back: Martin Fey, Mark Chichester, Elena Chapman, Ron Ballam, Wayne Faunt, Dilys Maclachlan. Front: John Dunster, Pat Stokes, Alistair Cowan, Chris Hawkins and Lesley Chandler (Captain).

The Windows.

North Side.



- 1 & 3 to 7. Perpendicular 1335-1530.
- 2. Reticulated tracery (Decorated period 1240-1360).

South, East and West Sides.



1, 2, 3, 7 & 10 are from the Perpendicular period.

4 appears to be from the Decorated period.

5 & 6 probably of 1825.

8 & 9 are from the Decorated period.

Gargoyles - North Side





A couple of close ups. *Photo on left by John Wilcox.*





and a few more.

Photo above and right by John Wilcox.





Gargoyles

South Side



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Photos above by John Wilcox.

The Tower





More Heads



Each side of west door



North Side and Towards East

North Door



West Door





South Porch

South porch - front





Could these be Victorian?





South porch - right hand side

Outside Merle Chapel





East End









The east wall of the church. The large stone slabs are indicated by the arrow.

It has been suggested that the large stone slabs, which form a rectangle under the east window of the church, may have been part of the shrine of St Congar (see History section).



The church in October 2013. Photo by Bob Rowles.