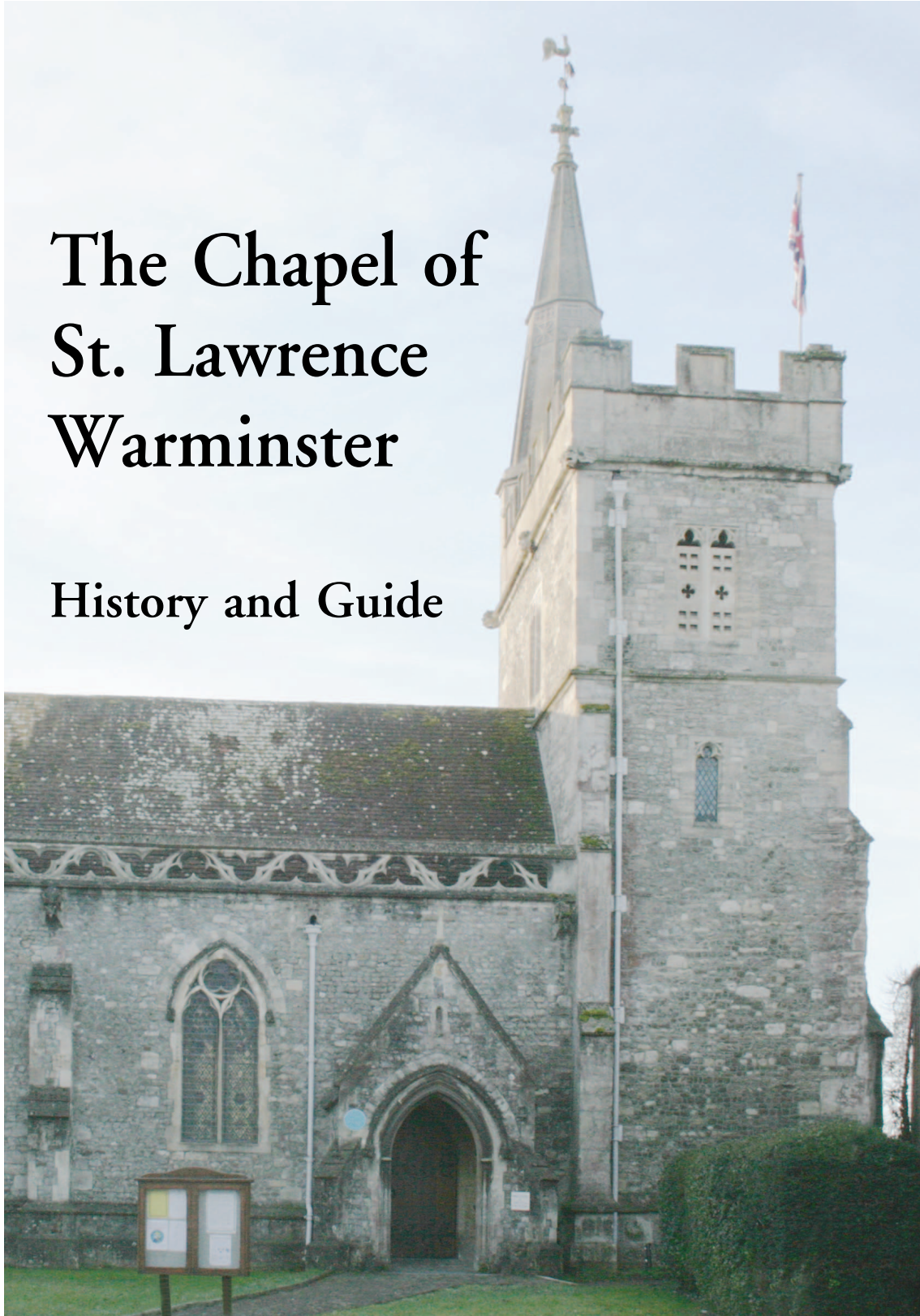


# The Chapel of St. Lawrence Warminster

History and Guide





New window depicting St. Lawrence and the chapel installed in 2014.

# The Chapel of St. Lawrence Warminster

## History and Guide

by Ray Shorto

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Chapel of St. Lawrence. You are now in a most unusual place because this Chapel has for the last 440 years or so existed outside of any denominational control by being run by a body of townsmen called Feoffees.

This came about because, during the Reformation, the Chapel was closed and sold. The people of Warminster, however, would not accept this situation and joined together to buy it back for public worship.

To take care of the building twelve stewards or trustees, or Feoffees as they are called, were appointed with the additional charge to appoint new Feoffees when necessary to keep the Chapel open and in good repair for ever.

Thus it became what is known as a 'Peculiar' as its administration is peculiar, or particular, to itself. It stands in good company as other Peculiars in England include St. George's Chapel in Windsor and Westminster Abbey.

We now aim to open the chapel for private prayer every day – an oasis of peace and calm right in the centre of the town. We also hold a number of Sunday services during the year and a weekly communion on Wednesdays at 10 o'clock in the morning.

The Chapel is named in honour of St. Lawrence who was archdeacon to Pope Sixtus II in Rome. This was an important position and included care of the treasury and distribution of alms to the poor.

In the year 258 the Roman Emperor Valerian demanded Lawrence should hand over the treasures of the Church to him. Lawrence asked for three days to gather the wealth together. This was granted but instead of handing it over to the Roman authorities he had distributed it amongst the poor of the area.

On the third day when ordered to hand over the riches he presented the poor, the crippled, the blind and the suffering and said that these are the treasures of the church.

He was immediately arrested and put to death, it is traditionally said, by being roasted on a gridiron over a hot coal fire; and in our new stained glass window you see him standing holding the gridiron in his hands.

The date of his death was 10th August and so on the nearest Sunday to that day we celebrate the life and witness of this saint with our patronal evensong.



## EARLY HISTORY

The Chapel of St. Lawrence was founded during the Plantagenet era as a Chantry or chapel of ease. The town of Warminster had expanded eastwards during the preceding centuries and the parish church of St. Denys was becoming increasingly isolated on the western fringe, and the population needed a more convenient place of worship.



Probably erected during the reign of Edward I (1272–1307) the earliest mention of it is in a deed dated 1290. It was endowed by two maiden sisters named Hewett and the family (name spelt variously Huwet, Houghwet, Huget, Hughet) continued to support it with generous grants of land and property over the next 100 or so years.

As a Chantry a priest would have been employed to hold services in the Chapel, especially to say mass in memory of the benefactor after their death in what was then the normal Catholic practice. He may also have been expected to provide some schooling for the local children.



Chantry rolls from that period mention that “there is a Chapell called S. Laurence Chappell standynge in the middle of the towne of Warminster, wherein the inhabitants of the said towne founde a preste, to synge for the ease of them, bycause the parishe church standith a quarter of a myle owte of the town; and convertid all the landis afore written in Warminster to that use and purpose and bare the rests of his wagis of their owne purses.”

It would appear that endowments originally intended for St. Denys were now being used to pay for St. Lawrence services and the two places of worship were run in conjunction with each other.

The big upset in the life of the chapel was precipitated by the Pope's refusal to grant Henry VIII a divorce with his queen Catherine who could not give him a male heir. In 1533 Henry declared himself head of the Church in England (still a Catholic church but without the Pope as head) and instructed his archbishop, Thomas Cranmer, to rule the marriage null and void.

However Papal authority still existed in the monasteries – and they retained much wealth and power. Henry's response was to close them and pension off the monks. The Crown kept the silver and gold, and other valuables from the monastery; the land was given or sold to Henry's adherents; and the brick and stone of the buildings was made freely available to the local populace for their



own use.

By 1540 most of the monasteries had been dissolved in this way, for example Longleat, the site of a priory had been bought from the Crown by Sir John Thynne for £53 (around £1 million today).

Henry was not finished with the wealth of the church and in 1545 an act was passed defining chantries as representing misapplied funds and misappropriated lands and that they and their assets would now belong to the king.

On Henry's death his successor Edward VI vigorously continued this theme and suppressed practically all the chantries that remained. Although his Act of 1547 intended the money raised to go to charitable use and for the public good most went into the royal coffers or those of his advisors.

St. Lawrence's Chapel suffered under these measures: Christopher James, the priest, was granted a pension of £5 per year – the tower, public bell and roofing lead was retained by the Crown; the remainder of the property was sold to Richard Roberts in January 1550 despite the public's plea to keep it open and functioning:

"The saide towne of Warminster is a very good market towne, and a great parishe, wherein be VIIIc (800) people whiche receyve the blessed Communion, and no preste besides the Vicar to help in administration there, savinge the said Chapel Preeste, whose name Christopher James, a man well able to serve a cure. In consideration whereof the said inhabitants desyre the King's most honourable Council to consider them accordynglye."

Richard Roberts sold on his new property within a few days to John Hartgill of Kilmington who in turn sold it to John Eyre of Warminster that same year. In 1563 it was further sold on to John Wardour.

As the lead of the roof belonged to the Crown and had not been stripped off so as to protect the curfew bell the basic structure of the chapel had suffered no serious damage although the contents had been removed and the graveyard had been let out for building on.

Ringling the curfew was a national requirement to remind the people to dampen down their fires at night to reduce the risk of fire in their thatched properties.

The bell had suffered a similar fate being seized by Henry Middlemore in 1571 on behalf of Queen Elizabeth. As a Groom of the Queen's Chamber he had obtained letters



patent giving him:

“Full power and lawfull authoritie to serche and fynd owte all manners of abbeyes, monasteries, priories, colleges, free chapels, chauntries etc, with all lands, goods, chattles, bells, leade, brick, tile, tymber, stone, glass, and iron to them apperteyninge”



Under this authority he found:

“One bell, now or lately hanging in the steple of the Chapell of St. Laurence, in Warmyster, which bell hath been concealed from our Sovereine Lady the Queen’s Majestie, and her progenitors.”

This he sold to Chidioc Wardoure of Platford for £3 6s 8d who then sold it to Thomas Wardour of Trowbridge.

So now whether by design or luck the whole chapel property – Thomas being the heir to John Wardour – comes into the ownership of one person.

By that time leading residents of the town had been watching for the recovery of the chapel. They had raised a considerable sum of money for the purpose and had commissioned three of the chief parishioners to take advantage of any opportunity that may arise.

These were John Gifford, William Middlecott and Henry Gerrard. They had already bought investment land with the original intention of founding a Grammar School.

In 1575, however, the opportunity arose to purchase the shell of the chantry chapel from Thomas Wardour. With some other leading local inhabitants this they did for the sum of £38 6s 8d (about £300,000 today).



The sale comprised:

“All that my late Chapell of Saynt Laurence, and all that my grouwnd wherein the sayd Chappell ys scituate, and also all my tenement cottage or chamber sett and beyng at the West of the sayd Chappell,

together with the great bell, commonlye called the Towne Bell, with all and singular the appurenances, to the only proper use and behoof of the sayd Wylliam Myddlecott, Henry Gerrard, Laurence Pylchard, Laurence Hyde, Christopher Eyer, and their heirs for ever, to be holden of the chief Lord and Lords of the fee.”

The Chapel was immediately brought back into use for prayer and worship under the direction of the vicar of Warminster.

The six original members of the committee of Purchase continued to act

until their number was reduced to three—John Gifford, William Middlecott senior, and Henry Gerrard. In October 1592 these three survivors executed an important instrument determining the management of the Chapel property for all succeeding time.

In an indenture, in Latin, conveying the Chapel premises, property and lands to twelve trustees, and making provision for the perpetual continuance of the trust:



**Scratched sundial on outside south wall showing Mass times**

“This indenture made 26th October 1592 (34 Elixabeth I) testifies that for all that Chapel of St. Laurence in Warminster, with the tower of the same, and the public bell, commonly called The Town Bell, therein hung; and all that ground in which the said Chapel and tower are situate; and that tenement with curtilage and garden now in the tenure of John Pytman; and also one tenement and garden in Bourton, alias Boreham, containing one rood, lately held by Christopher Green; and one rood of meadow in Bourton called The Ham, held by John Gyfforde adjoining the common called The Ilonds; and one meadow of two acres near Furniox, held by Elizabeth Bristowe, widow; and one courtyard and garden of one rood in the street called The Backlane, occupied by Richard Stibbes; also that cottage and eight acres of land in the Field of Warminster which formerly belonged to Thomas Hewet—To be held by them the aforementioned Feoffees, and their assigns for ever, to their sole use and behoof for evermore under service due to the chief lords of the fee. And whenever Four, or fewer, of the said Feoffees only shall be surviving, then those survivors shall enfeof, and convey, all the before-named property of the Chapel to Twelve, Ten, or Eight of the principal honest and discreet men of the parish of Warminster. And this shall be done henceforth, from time to time, for ever, as often as there shall be Four, or fewer, Feoffees surviving. And the said Feoffees shall each and all give their endeavour that the profits derived from the Chapel estates shall be disposed of to such uses as shall be thought fit by the major part of them.’





## THE FEOFFEES TAKE CHARGE

The town now had its chapel back, but controversy immediately surrounded this first set of Feoffees, as it did the second. They were both accused of mismanagement of the designated funds, and indeed hinted suggestions of personal gain were made.

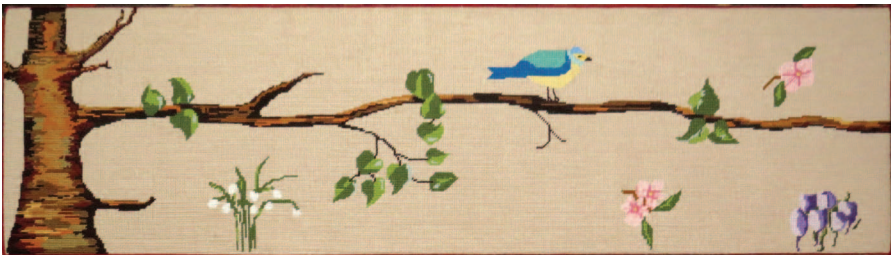
Eventually a group of townsmen forced the issue to court and at a Court of Chancery in 1631 (6 Charles I) they were indeed found guilty and

“The Court condemns the Defendants on all counts; that the sums claimed by the Feoffees for repairs to the Chapel and expenses of law, be not allowed; that their accounts made up, and given yearly to the Vicar and Churchwardens, and some of the chief parishioners, not being Feoffees, on the usual account day; that the £35 costs awarded to the plaintiff Sloper by the arbitrators, and the arrears of rents, to be recoverable from any of the Feoffees whom the Plaintiffs may choose to sue for the same, to the use and benefits of the Town and Parish of Warminster, unless the defendants shall show cause to the contrary.”

This was not the end of the affair but the Civil War between Charles and Parliament overshadowed most other events and little business was done in the Courts of Law.

Despite the acrimony the Chapel was being cared for by these Feoffees and in 1642 a memorandum records that in the months of August and September the Chapel Steeple was pointed and amended and also the north side of the Tower above the uppermost window thereof was taken down and newly set up and the corner of the Chapel next to William Ederton's house was taken down and newly made by William Smyth the mason for the sum of £5; and that this was allowed for out of the parish rates.

Eventually, however, in 1651 the old surviving Feoffees (John Bennett, William Middlecott and Stephen Blake) appointed a new Trust and the



Communion kneeler – spring

ongoing law-suit was finally dropped.

These new Feoffees, obviously mindful of what had gone on before, instituted new clauses into the deed of trust; adding:

“The profits and revenues of the hereditaments and premises belonging to St. Laurence’s Chapel have been from time to time ever since laid out by the successors of the first named Feoffees in the repairing, maintaining, and beautifying of the said Chapel and the buildings belonging to the same. ... And the said Feoffees shall henceforth every night in the year at 8 of the clock in the night cause the said bell to be stricken or tolled and rung out. ... And all arrears of rent shall be called in, and invested, and the interest paid to the poor on 2nd February every year at the discretion of the Feoffees, Churchwardens, and Overseers. And the Feoffees shall at every Church reckoning render account to the Inhabitants of Warminster of their receipts and disbursements in writing under their hands, or four of them, to be written fair in a book kept only for that purpose.”

The next set of Feoffees added that the bell should be tolled every morning at 4 o’clock (which it continued to be done every day until about the year 1800) ... and the rents are to be expended in repairs, in ringing the Curfew and keeping the clock and bell, and two crooks, and 12 firebuckets.

In 1651 amongst the lands recorded as belonging to the Chapel are six houses in the churchyard between the Chapel and the High Street, a cottage for the Sexton and several meadows and properties elsewhere in the town.

Other notable expenditure was:

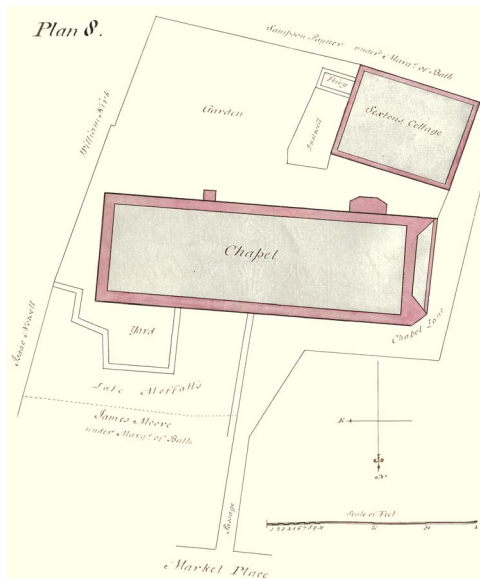
1725 – The body of the Chapel was rebuilt from its foundations by architect William Leigh for £85. It was 20' high with length and breadth as before. This was condemned as being ‘in the barbarous fashion of George II, when Gothic architecture was wholly discarded, and a miserable bastard Grecian took its place ... with four round-headed



The Chapel peeps out  
over the front cottages  
in 1840

windows, and lofty and unsightly pews.'

- 1770 – A new roof to the tower, and lead, costing £25 7s 3d.
- 1775 – Further repairs and beautifying the tower and Chapel. Repairing and guilding the weathercock cost £37 7s 4d.
- 1776 – New paving for the Chapel floor – £16 12/- plus 22½ feet of stone – 18s 9d. prayer book 15s 6d, surplice for the chaplain £3 18s 6d.
- 1786 – When the bell was rehung William Cackerele was paid 2s 6d for beer for the men.
- 1810 – Paid to Mr. Vardy for stationery – 4s 6d.
- 1820 – Paid to Edwerd Curtis for styling and beautifying the chapel – £3 5s 7d.
- 1813 25th March – The Vicar of Warminster, Dr. Rowlandson, preached in the Chapel to two convicted murderers, George Carpenter and George Ruddock, before they were taken onto Arn Hill and hanged. This was the last public hanging in the town.
- 1828 – Plans and maps of all land and properties owned by the chapel. On plan 8 the dwelling area leased to James Moore (which would be demolished in 1854) with the joint use of pump, garden, privy and dust well to the rear of the Chapel.



**Chapel plan and grounds as envisaged in 1828. James Moore's area is to the bottom left.**

1829 – The spire was taken down and re-erected according to the ancient model.

1846 – Permission requested for the inmates of the workhouse to attend Sunday worship in the chapel

In 1841 The Reverend Arthur Fane was installed as Vicar of Warminster. He was keen to modernise worship at the Chapel and in 1848 he requested that the doors be removed from the pews. He was later to ask for the pews to be removed. Then in 1852 he discussed with the Feofees the bequest in the late John Daniell's will for the removal of the corner

house in front of the Chapel so it could be seen from the street.

Two years later Mrs. Daniell asked the Feoffees to approach the Marquis of Bath re the cornerhouse, the value is £37 10/-, the Feoffees to pay £18 15/- to the Marquis of Bath for his  $\frac{2}{5}$  ownership.

Further efforts were made by Reverend Fane during 1855–56 and the houses obscuring the Chapel were bought and demolished. A new roof with parapet was raised on the nave and battlements put on the tower, the porch was built and new windows added throughout.

The Chapel was re-opened on Thursday 22nd January 1857 by the Bishop of Salisbury with Holy Communion in the Chapel 'at an early hour' followed by a sermon preached at the Parish Church. At the close of the service a collection was made towards the outstanding cost of restoration.

The total cost of the restoration was:						£	s.
General expenses of nave and purchase of houses ...						850	0
Tower, roof and windows ... ..						100	0
East window ... ..						35	0
Window north, next Altar ... ..						40	0
do. south, next Altar ... ..						38	0



The Chapel seen from the south in 1900



Two windows nearest tower ...	...	...	...	...	15	0
Altar plate, rails etc ...	...	...	...	...	25	0
Lectern ...	...	...	...	...	5	10
Prayer Desk ...	...	...	...	...	8	0
					<hr/>	
					£1,096	10

The restoration was not to everyone's taste, however, and a letter and a poem were published in the Warminster Miscellany complaining about the 'nameless, shapeless, ugly' faces on the outside.

A new organ to a design of the Reverend John Baron and made by Nelson Hall of Warminster was installed in 1860. The case is of oak and the keyboard is so arranged that the organist faces east. It was later rebuilt by W. G. Vowles after it had been damaged.

Mr. Hall had started making organs for small churches at Upton Scudamore to designs by the Reverend Baron, rector of the village. He was reputedly both deaf and dumb and made the instruments in a small workshop adjacent to the rectory. He later moved to larger premises in Emwell Street (previously known as Back Street), Warminster, opposite the Weymouth Arms.



The demolition of neighbouring properties gave this view of the Chapel in July 1981

Further repairs were required in 1904 because of dust and in 1907 it was considered whether to buy a harmonium instead. The organ continued to cause concern and in 1950 it was even suggested that it should be sold. In 1954 it was offered to Christ Church, but would have been far too small to be of use there. In 1974 an electric blower was added and the organ restored again.

During the 15 years following the restoration of the Chapel generous bequests were made by the Seagram and Bleeck families totalling £700 which were invested. In 1903 the income from this fund was £15 or a 2.14% return.

1887 – Mains water laid to sexton's cottage

1897 – The spire was struck by lightening and considerable damage caused.

1922 – All the outlying properties were sold and the proceeds invested.

1924 – Electric lighting was installed in the Chapel. Until then it had been lit by gas lamps.

1927 – The font was replaced in the Chapel. One was moved from the Minster Church where it had stood unused near the vestry door in the north transept since 1888 when they had been given a new one. The decision was made because 'there at present are more baptisms there than at The Minster'.

1934 – Although the Chapel now had electric lighting the Sexton's cottage still used oil lamps and candles, so this year electricity was put in there too.

1939 February – A Peace Bell — or Angelus was being rung each day at noon 'in the hope that all who hear it will pause a moment to pray for the peace of the world.'

During the Second World War it was decided that due to lighting restrictions and the difficulty of



The west window –  
Them that honour Me, I will honour

blacking out the other churches the Chapel would be the only church used during blackout periods. The curfew bell ringing is also suspended because an air raid warning might not be heard if the bell was being rung for any length of time.

1944 – The south east window, which depicted Elijah, and the Good Shepherd, was damaged due to bomb blast and was replaced with plain glass.

1960 – The front railings were removed.

1962 – The Warminster and District Gardeners' Society who keep the garden in front of the Chapel so neat and tidy are to buy a new lawnmower.

1972 – The sexton's cottage is used as town museum.

1977 – The Methodists use the Chapel whilst their own Church undergoes alterations.

1982 – The sexton's cottage is now used for the Citizens Advice Bureau.

1988 – Roman Catholic church say Mass here whilst their own St. George's Church is renovated.

1997 – Front lawn covered in flowers brought by the townspeople in memory of Princess Diana of Wales and a memorial service held on 6th September – the day of her funeral.



**Front garden strewn with tributes  
following death of Princess Diana in 1997**

## THE BELLS AND CLOCK

It is probable that the chapel can owe its continued existence to the fact that when the chantries were suppressed the town bell hanging in the tower was not sold but retained by the crown, presumably for the continued use of the people of Warminster.



**The town bell – made in 1657**

In the chapel records there is mention of a clock in 1651. This was used for the timing of the daily 8 p.m. curfew bell and the 9 a.m. Sunday morning call to worship service bell which would have been tolled by hand.

The sexton had the responsibility of ringing the curfew bell and in 1657 he was paid £1 6/- for the year for this duty. That same year a new bell was installed and dated 1657. This was cast by John Lott in Common Close (now called The Close, off High Street) which was just across the road from the Chapel.



**The town bell – made by John Lott**

It had his initials I (a bell) L upon it. Roger Townsend the musician left a memorandum "The Chapel bell was cast in Common Close by John Lott. Most of the old and young people put money, Half-crowns, Shillings, and Sixpences into the

furnace, which makes it of such a soft silvery sound."

It weighs approximately 16.5 cwt (838 kilos) and measures  $45\frac{3}{8}$  inches (123 cm) across the mouth. It is made of bronze and tuned to the note E.

The bell was freshly hung in 1783 at a cost of £24 15s 9d.

Originally the bell would have been rung in the conventional way by swinging it and the clapper striking on its return; now, however, the bell



remains stationary and is only stuck by a hammer.

In the early 19th century a longer rope and pulley system was installed so the bell could be rung from the ground floor by the tower door to save the climb to the clock room each time.

Later in 1854 so the sexton did not have to come out in all weather each evening to ring the curfew wooden trunking



**The town bell – clapper and graffiti inside**

was constructed from the tower to his cottage which stood behind the Chapel taking the bell rope to him.

Then more recently an electric system has been devised to operate a hammer to ring the eight o'clock curfew.

The bell had another use also. It was used to summon the fire brigade when they needed to be called out until 1911 when the new hooter at Bartlett's Brewery was used for the purpose.

The instructions in Coates's 1900 Warminster Directory for calling out the Brigade are lengthy and hopefully the fire had not caused too much damage before the Brigade arrived:

"In case of fire application should be made to the officers (of the Urban Council yard in George Street) who will call the Brigade together; to Mr.



**Electric curfew striking mechanism**

A. F. Long, waterworks manager, The Chestnuts, Portway; to the Superintendent of Police, Ash Walk; and to the person in charge of the bell at St. Laurence's Chapel"

The clock was replaced by the current one in 1764. This cost £30 and was made by local clockmaker Tilliam Rudd and paid for by public subscrip-

tion.

The following year two bells to ring the quarter hours were paid for. They had been made by Thomas Rudhall of Gloucester at a cost of fifteen guineas (£15 15/-).

The larger of these two has a diameter of  $17\frac{3}{4}$  inches (45 cm), weighs 150 lbs (68 kg) and is tuned to C. The other bell has a diameter of  $14\frac{5}{16}$  inches (36.4 cm), weighs 70 lbs (31.75 kg) and is tuned to E flat.



**The two quarter jacks**

The chapel accounts even mention the cost of oil for the clock – 2/- in 1764 for one year. Ten years later and 3/- was paid for the oil.

The main frame of the clock is made of wrought iron and holds a three train movement. To the left is the hour strike, the going movement is in the centre and on the right is the quarter hour strike.

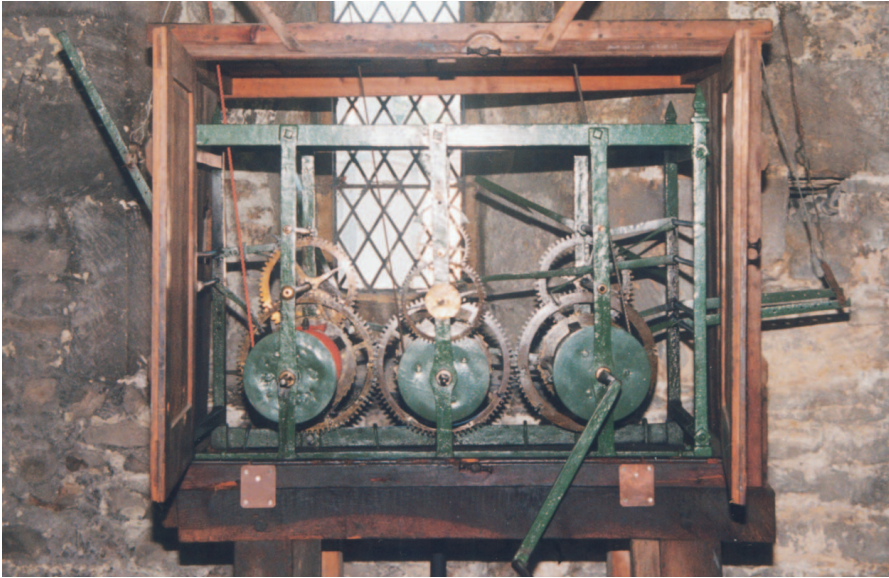
The ropes from the three winding drums pass over pulleys suspended from the tower roof. With their corresponding weights they then descend back to the

clock chamber. Fully wound they would have driven the clock for about a day and a half.



**Electric winding mechanism for the clock**

The clock thus required winding every day to keep it going. In 2005 an electric winding mechanism was fitted and so the daily climbing of the 25 spiral steps to the winding room is a thing of the past.



**The clock with manual winding handle**

As was normal in early times no face was fitted to the first clock. When the Chapel was sold in 1550 and houses built on the graveyard in front, the tower could no longer be seen from the street and so no face was considered for subsequent replacement clocks.

Several times over the last 100 years or so, now the houses have been removed, it has been suggested to fit one; most recently in 1985 when local opinion was divided and eventually planning permission was refused.

No doubt at some time a face will be installed and the old clock can give the time all the time not just on the quarter hour.



**The clock's hourly stike control**



## INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

When the 21st century dawned the Chapel found itself in progressive hands. Urgent and extensive repairs and modernisation to the sexton's cottage were required. This was seen as a necessary investment and all early funds were put to this cause. The cottage is now let on a commercial basis and provides a regular source of income towards the running costs of the Chapel.

The Chapel continues to be a centre of prayer for the town having been used by Amnesty International for Forget-me-not services, collective prayers for peace during the Iraq conflict and prayers for the G8 economic summit meeting, the twin tower terrorist attack in New York and Phillipine typhoon disaster, as well as services on the 20th anniversary of the Hill- sborough disaster and the Queen's Diamond Anniversary.

The regular weekly communion service continues to be well attended, as do the many special Sunday services. These have included celebrating local volunteers and charities, Armed Forces Day, Battle of Britain Day, Easter Evensong, Harvest Festival and the popular Boxing Day carol service.

The Chapel is now licensed for Anglican weddings; as it is a peculiar and outside the direct control of the Church of Eng-



The annual November  
Field of Remembrance



Communion kneeler – summer





**Gargoyles – from drawing to finished carving**

land special licences use to have to be obtained each time which was time-consuming and costly.

Funerals are also held here with 100 people attending on one occasion. There are also the occasional baptisms.

The war in Afghanistan cost several soldiers from the Yorkshire Regiment, based here in Warminster, their lives and books of condolence were opened in the Chapel for the townspeople to sign. A lasting reminder of that conflict is the shell cross to the memory of Marine Anthony Hotine which stands in one windowsill.

Each year, in November, a Field of Remembrance is opened on the front lawn and on the 11th at 11 o'clock two minutes' silence is observed.

However the Christian message is not all prayer and worship: the Chapel is also used for many charitable events. The Rotary Club use it as a centre for tool collections for Africa, various groups including the Fairtrade organisation have used the front lawn for cake and coffee stalls as well as the usual bric-a-brac sales.

Every year throughout the Advent and Christmas period a flower festival is



held with all proceeds usually going to a local charity.

On the entertainment side many of the local schools have held concerts here showing just how much talent there is in our youngsters. Other concerts have included jazz and blues and of course organ recitals.

The building itself has also undergone a series of repairs and improvements during these last 15 years.

Extensive repairs to the tower stonework was carried out in 2010 with a local competition held for designs to replace two of the gargoyles (or more correctly chimera as they did not convey water). The winners were two nine-year-old girls who had the honour of seeing their designs carved into Bath stone by a Thruxton mason and affixed to the tower. Hopefully they will be there for at least another 200 years.

A similar competition was also held through the *Warminster Journal* for a design to replace the window lost in 1944 due to bomb blast. The winning



The West End screen and font



### Short-listed designs for the new window

design depicting St. Lawrence and our Chapel was made up by Salisbury Cathedral glassworks and installed at the end of 2013.

A major recent improvement has been the provision of a toilet at the west end. This was incorporated into a project commemorating the Diamond Jubilee of our Queen Elizabeth in 2012.

A screen was built across the west end under the tower to provide a robing area for the priest and kitchen facilities for refreshments. Above, on the balcony area is storage space enabling the Chapel area to be kept clutter free.

Matching this screen a reredos, in green oak, has now been installed around the sanctuary at the east end of the chapel. This was first proposed in 1914 but the advent of the First World War put everything on hold and the project was not taken up again. That is until now, 100 years on, when it was completed to commemorate those from the town who gave their lives in that conflict.

The two poppy emblems, carved in oak, either side are now a universal sign of remembrance.

Comfort has also been on the agenda with new tapestry kneelers for the communion rail, which depict the Tree of Life in each of the four seasons, and pew cushions to sit on. These have mostly been made by local ladies, but one was worked upon in Australia.

Those with disabilities have not been forgotten with the front path raised and relaid to do away with the porch steps outside. Also a loop system has been



installed for those members of the congregation who are hard of hearing. The new toilet has also been made with a wide doorway and is disabled user friendly.

It is with great appreciation that the Feoffees say thank you to the Friends of the Chapel, local Councils, Charitable Foundations and especially the people of Warminster that funds for these repairs and improvements have been so forthcoming. This is your Chapel, we are so pleased it is so well loved and cherished.



Display from one of the many flower festivals



New oak reredos and panelling sets off the sanctuary

## A TOUR OF THE CHAPEL

As you enter the chapel above and surrounding the main door are many boards listing all the feoffees dating back to 1570. The more recent feoffees are listed on the wall facing this door.

Turning left to look round clockwise we first see the pews. They are Victorian and replaced the high-backed pews of earlier times.

The first window on the north wall probably also dates to Victorian times.

On the sill is a shell cross - one made of spent artillery shell casings - in memory of Warminster Marine Anthony Hotine, killed in action, in Afghanistan in 2010.



**Shell cross memorial**

Further along the wall are three drawings of the church. The first made in the 1850s and dedicated to the Rev. Prebendary Fane, Vicar of Warminster, by his Obedient Servant, W. H. Tayler (Arthur Fane was vicar of Warminster from 1841 to 1859). The second in is a reproduction view of the chapel from the south in 1804 by John Buckler, the original being in the



**Christ in the North window**

Along the wall is a photographic display of the panorama of the town seen from the top of the tower in June 2004. Compare this with the one on the wall opposite taken earlier, in February, the same year. Unfortunately insurance issues mean that we can no longer take visitors up onto the roof of the tower to see this view for themselves.



**Moses in the North window**





**Bishop's Chair**

Wiltshire Museum in Devizes. The third is a more modern illustration drawn circa 1981 when the old Kendricks shop next door had been demolished but before the present red-brick building was built.

The next window dates from 1856 and represents 'Prayer'. It depicts firstly Christ praying in the Garden of Gethsemane whilst his disciples slept. And in the right-hand panel is Moses, Aaron and Hur overlooking the battle between Joshua and Amalek.



**Prayer desk**



**East window – St. Stephen, Christ, and St. Lawrence**

private prayer and meditation. Opposite this is the prayer desk used by the officiating ministers at service.

The fine oak reredos was installed in 2014 to mark the centenary of the start of the Great War, but made to a 1914 design.

The east window depicts 'Our Lord in Glory' with: on the left, St. Stephen, centre Christ (the Lamb of God), and on the right St. Lawrence and is illuminated from outside during evening services.



Carved oaken poppy

Coming round to the south wall: the first window is modern, being installed in 2013, and depicts St. Lawrence himself and our chapel.

The plaque on the wall, next, was placed to commemorate the rebuilding of the chapel. It was repainted in 2009. The wording is: "This Chapel of St. Laurence was dedicated to the service of God temp Edward I circa MCCXC. Since the 34th year of Elizabeth it has been held in trust by feoffees and the services of the Church duly celebrated therein. The fabric was rebuilt 1725 "O Lord prosper Thou our handywork". Feoffees: 1853 John Ravenhill, Chas. Griffith, Charles Bleeck, J. E. Halliday, Matthew Davies, W F Seagram."

The other window on this side is not noteworthy, but underneath is the second photographic panorama from the tower mentioned previously.

Next we come to the organ. This is an excellent example of a Scudamore organ made by Nelson Hall in Back Street (now Emwell Street), in Warminster.

Mr. Hall had started making small organs in the neighbouring parish of Upton



Restoration plaque of 1853



West window



Scudamore before moving into larger town premises.

The book shelving and cabinet next are recent and not of any special note.

The font used to be at St. Denys Church. There is an engraving there showing it in the early 1840s. The cover is more recent. It was given to St. Denys Church (his native parish) at Eastertide 1861 by James Wilton of Salisbury.

The oak west end screening is also a recent improvement: further details of this project can be found elsewhere in this booklet.

Passing through this door, open during



Scudamore organ



services and chapel functions are the priest's robing area, the toilet and the kitchen. Also here are the stairs to the bell tower.

In the toilet is an old notice of services held weekly in the chapel. Communion and matins were celebrated daily each morning, with evensong at 6.00 p.m. Quite a busy place!

Back out into the chapel we need to look



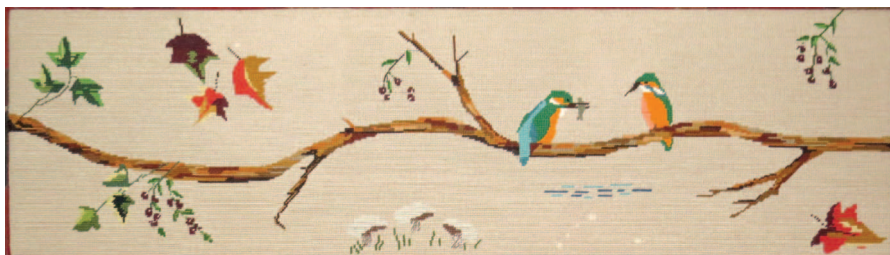
Prayer time in days gone bye



Font

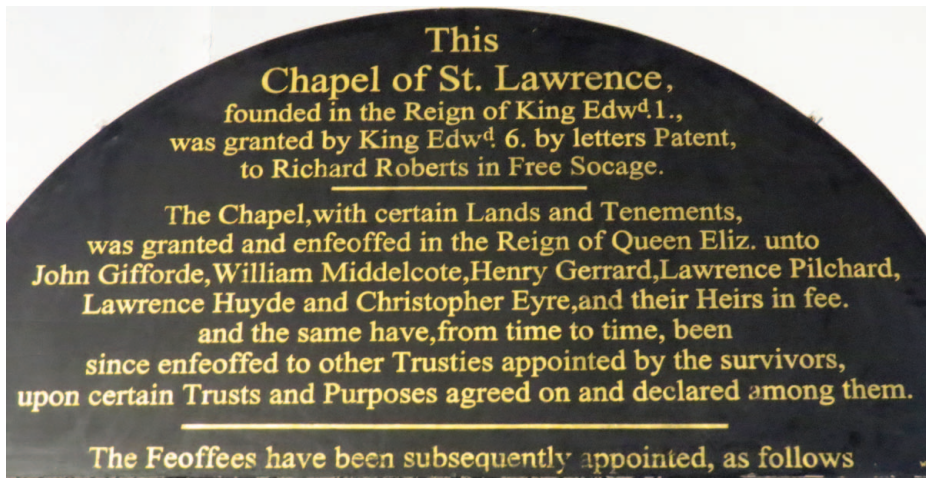
up to the west window which is a memorial of David Kinnier who left £100 to the Chapel. Its inscription is "Them that honour Me, I will honour" with his date of death partially visible at the bottom.

We are now back at the notice board and main door which completes our tour.



Communion kneeler – autumn

## FEOFFEES SINCE 1570



**5 April, 12 Elizabeth I (1570)**

*Appointed by Thomas Hewett*

John Gifforde Gent

William Myddelcote Clothman

Henry Gerrard Clothman

**16 June, 17 Elizabeth I (1575)**

*Appointed by Thomas Warder*

John Gifforde, Gent

William Middelcote, Clothman

Laurence Pilchard, Yeoman

Henry Gerrard, Clothman

Laurence Hyde,

of Westberye, Esquire

Christopher Eyre,

of Upton Skudmore, Gentleman

**26 October, 34 Elizabeth I (1592)**

*Appointed by John Gifford, William*

*Middlecote, Henry Gerard*

George Gifford,

later of Muncion Devrill, Gent

William Gifford, Gent

William Blake, Yeoman

William Blake Jnr,

of Smallbrooke, Yeoman

William Rawlynes, Yeoman

John Stanlake, Gent

William Boyes, Mercer

Francis Rawlynes, Yeoman

William Taylor, Yeoman

Henry Wansye, Glover

Henry Gerrard Jnr, Yeoman

William Middlecott Jnr, Yeoman

**10 December, 10 James (1612)**

William Gifford,

of Boreham also Burton, Esquire

Edward Middlecott, Gent

John Bennett, of Smallbrooke

and Steeple Ashton Gent

William Myddlecott Jnr, afterwards

of Boston, Co Lincoln Gent

Edward Slade, Mercer



John Blake, Yeoman  
Stephen Blake, Yeoman  
John Boyes, Mercer  
William Wilton Jnr, Yeoman  
John Wansey, Yeoman  
William Baunton, Yeoman  
William Perry, Yeoman

**28 May, 2 Charles II (1651)**

Edward Middlecott, Gent  
Francis Bennett, Gent  
Benjamin Gifford,  
    of Boreham, Gent  
Thomas Slade, Gent  
John Butcher, Mercer  
Humphrey Buckler, Yeoman  
John Wansye, Yeoman  
William Wilton, Yeoman  
William Blake, Yeoman  
John Slade, Mercer  
William Chaundler, Yeoman  
William Davis Snr, Yeoman

**21 Dec, 6 William & Mary (1694)**

Edward Middlecott, Gent  
Thomas Buckler, Gent  
John Bennett, Of Smallbrooke, Gent  
Thomas Lulowe, Gent  
William Slade, Gent  
John Butcher, Mercer  
John Slade Jnr, Malster  
William Chandler, Gent  
William Adlam, Malster  
Gerrard Wilton, Malster  
John Hodges, Grocer  
John Wansey, Hill Deverell, Yeoman

**35 March, 10 George I (1724)**

John Gifford, of Boreham, Esquire  
Thomas Buckler, Gent

Edward Middlecott, Gent  
John Halliday, Gent  
John Slade, Gent  
John Bennett Jnr, Gent  
Thomas Ludlow, Gent  
John French, Clothier  
George Perry, Malster  
William Adlam Jnr, Malster  
James Wilton, Malster  
Samuel Pikeman, Malster

**27 January, 4 George III (1764)**

William Buckler,  
    of Boreham Esquire  
William Slade, Clerk  
John Langley, Clothier  
Benjamin Ludlow, Gent  
Richard Samuel Wyche, Gent  
John Bennett Jnr, Gent  
John Wansey, Gent  
Richard Randall,  
    afterwards of Chicklade, Clothier  
John Masklyn Jnr, Wool-stapler  
William Wansbrough, Gent  
Edward Cockey, Wine Merchant  
John Bleeck, Malster

**22 May, 30 George III (1790)**

Edward Middlecott, Esquire  
John Slade, Gent  
James Ludlow, Gent  
Francis Bennett, Gent  
Thomas Buckler, Linen Draper  
William Wansey, Clothier  
Edward Butler, Clothier  
Thomas Warren, Gent  
Charles Aldridge, Malster  
Edmund Halliday, Gent

John Hughes, Gent  
John Thring, Gent

**8 November, 2 William IV (1832)**

John Bleeck  
John Ravenhill, Magistrate  
Thomas Davis, Land Agent  
John Tivotoe Thring  
John Edmund Halliday, Gent  
Mathew Davis Jnr, Gent  
William Frowd Seagram, Surgeon  
Edmund Leigh Lye, Gent  
John Daniell, Surveyor  
Charles Bleeck, Surgeon  
Charles Tap Griffith,  
Rev of Grammar School;  
William Slade, Rev

**21 July, 39 Victoria (1876)**

Charles Albert Bleek  
George Bush, Surveyor,  
Tax Inspector  
William Chapman, Gent  
Thomas Cruse, Land Agent  
William L. Feltham  
Phillip Grubb, Surgeon  
Joseph Hinton, Surgeon  
Henry Parr Jones,  
Land Agent for Marquess of Bath  
Thomas Ponting, Clerk To Council  
Joseph Smith, Corn Factor  
George Thomas Vicary  
Henry Charles White

**1916 (1921)**

Hugh Wakeman, Solicitor  
Charles Bleek, Gent  
Alfred Coates, Stationer  
John Foreman, Tailor

Albert Long, Surveyor  
William Marshall, Solicitor  
William Blaxter, Headmaster,  
Lord Weymouth School  
William Randall, Registrar  
Sidney Smith, Corn Merchant  
Hugh A. Wakeman, Solicitor  
Henry Wheeler  
Wilfred Hogan, Surgeon  
George Aitken,  
Land Agent to Marquess of Bath  
Charles White

**1939**

Alfred Coates, Stationer

**1948**

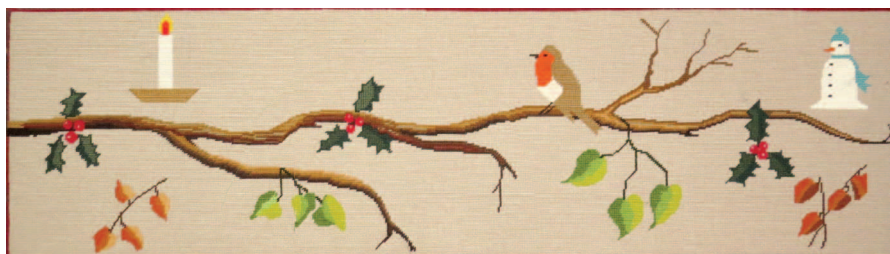
William Marshall, Solicitor  
Alfred Coates, Stationer  
Herbert Barber  
C. G. T. Colson, Vicar  
Ronald Graham-Campbell, Doctor  
Herbert Knight, Solicitor  
William Wickham, Agriculturist  
Edward Symes, Gent  
Wilfred Hogan,  
Inspector Of Health WUDC  
William Marshall, Solicitor  
G. E. Vicary, Solicitor

**1952 (1954)**

-1979 Herbert Barber  
-1959 Alfred Coates, Stationer  
-1975 Hedley Curtis, Builder  
-1991 Ronald Graham-Cambell,  
Doctor  
-1975 Herbert Knight  
-1954 William Marshall  
-1955 Edward Symes  
-1964 William Wickham

# **Appointed from 1960**

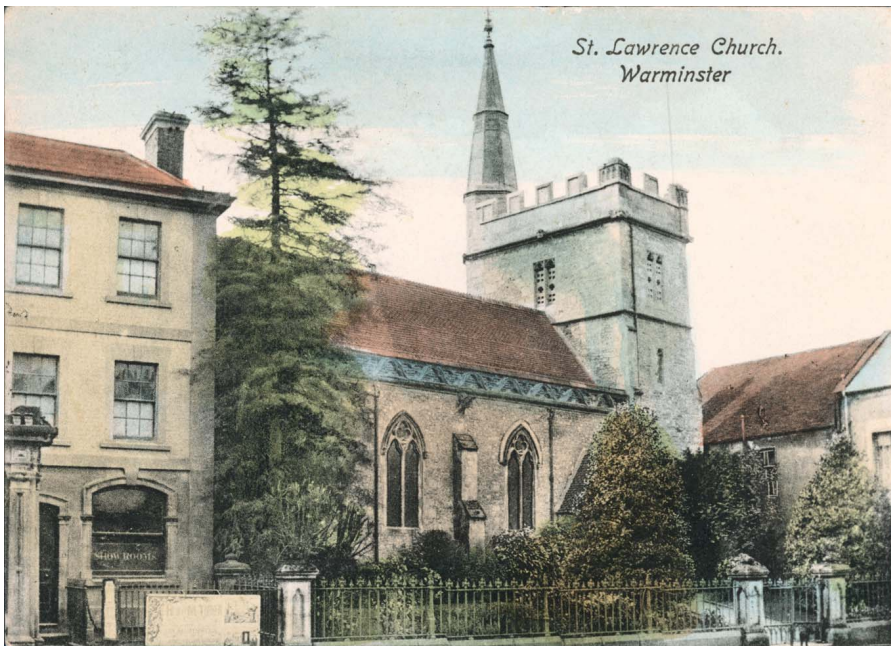
1960–1967	Rev. John Freeman, Rector	1992–	David Pollard, Factory manager
1969–1979	Arthur Beaven, Shoe sales	1996–2006	Paul Batchelor, Bicycle sales
1969–1974	Desmond Bishop, Fishmonger	1997–	Glen Shuttlewood, Undertaker
1969–1995	Fredrick Byrne, Civil Servant	1998–2003	Matthew Butcher, Builder
1969–2000	Robert Culverhouse, Builder	1999–2009	Richard Owen, Book printer
1969–1997	Raymond Gerrett, Builder	1999–	Andrew Folker, Headteacher
1969–1985	Rev. Anthony Johnson, Rector	1999–	Raymond Shorto, Printer/Publisher
1969–1980	Gervase Nicholls, Solicitor	2001–2009	Colin Zimmerman, Headteacher
1969–2009	Geoffrey Tout, Local Government	2004–2015	David Frostick, Water manager
1975–2004	Geoffrey Butcher, Builder	2006–	Keith Williams, BBC programmer
1975–2011	Philip Howard, Insurance agent	2007–	Andrew Davis, Carpet fitter
1975–2007	Dudley Stone, Electrical repairs	2008–	Stephen Pearson, Incorporated Engineer
1979–1998	Robert Butcher, Builder	2009–	Keith Rattray, Retired firefighter
1980–1999	Stephen Stiles, Ironmonger	2012–2014	Stephen Royce-Rogers, Picture framer
1982–1998	Patrick Baxter, Ret. Col.	2013–	Ian Frostick, Seafood sales
1987–2000	Rev. Roger Sharpe, Rector		



**Communion kneeler – winter**

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1857–1867 *The Warminster Herald*  
1881–present *The Warminster Journal*



The Chapel seen at the beginning of the 20th Century



John Buckler's painting of the Chapel from the south in 1804. At that time it was hardly visible from the main road as there were six high houses in front of it obscuring the view. *Courtesy of the Wiltshire Museum who hold the original.*



