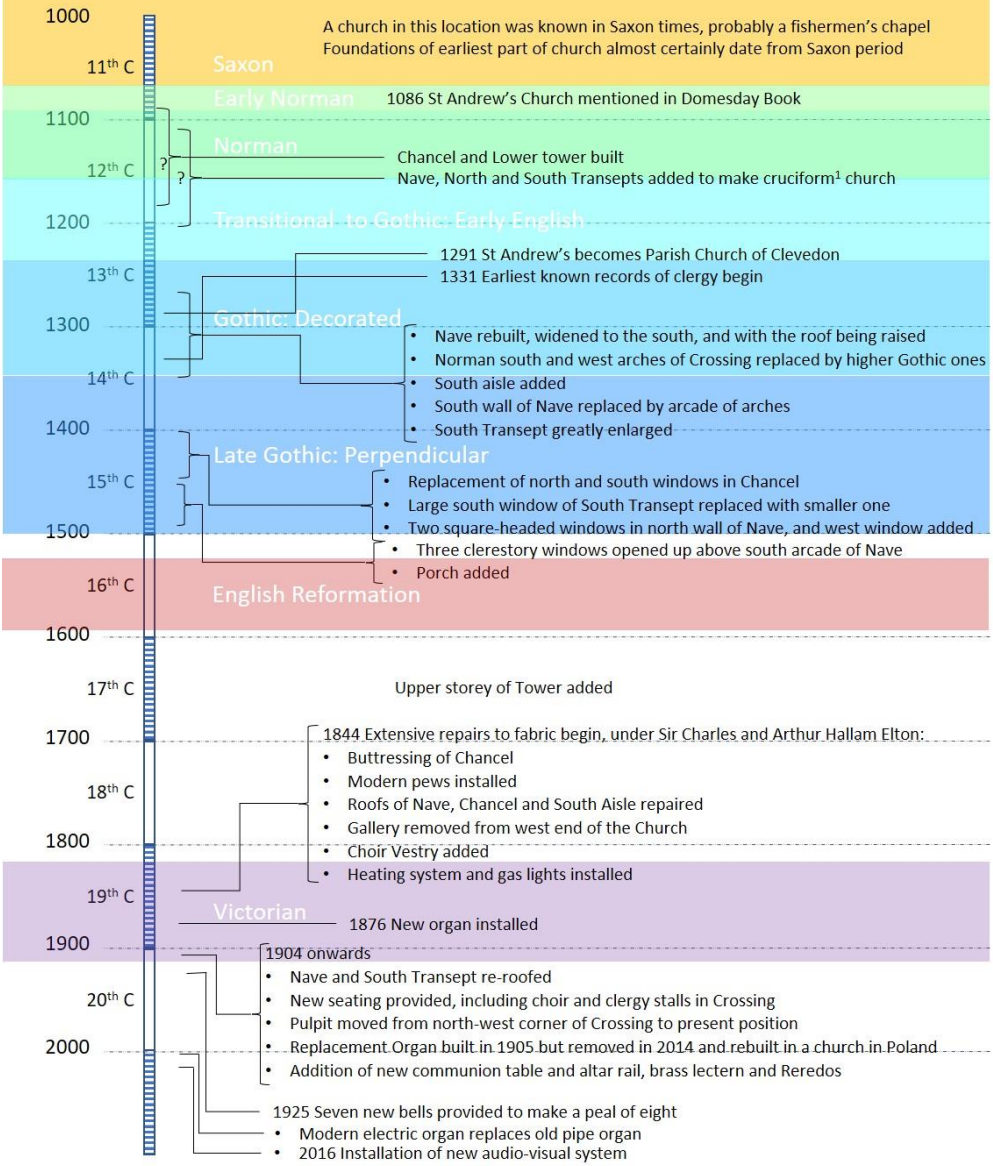
St Andrew's Church Clevedon
A Brief Tour

*Text and plans adapted and abridged from earlier guides by R. S. Renton (1948) and Rev. E. N. T. Sandford, Third Edition (Revised in 2000). For a more detailed account of the history of the church, the latter is still available.

A Brief Timeline of St Andrew's Church Clevedon

Unless specified, all timings are approximate.
Boundaries of historical periods are approximate and given as a guide only



[1]Cruciform = cross shaped

Plan of the Church Today

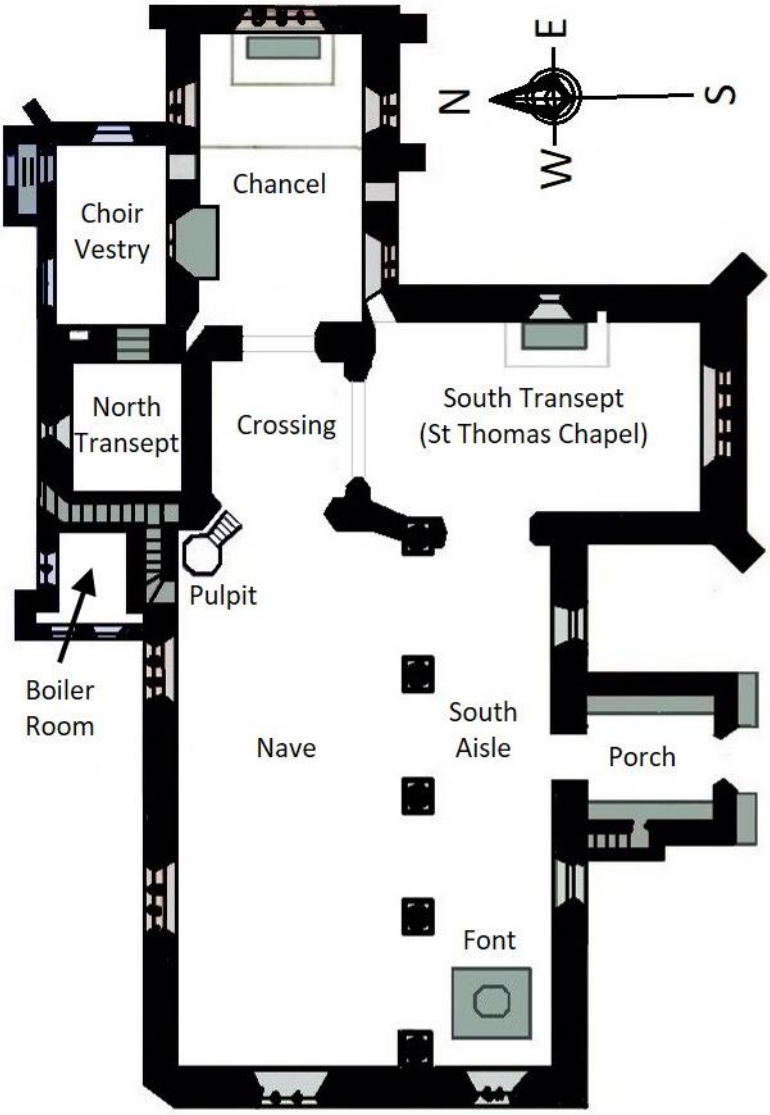


Figure 1 Plan of St Andrew's Church as it is today.

Directions in this guide will be given on the basis of points of the compass.

The Porch

Figure 2 Exterior view of the Porch

Enter the Porch through the south door. The Porch was a late 15th century addition to the church. Just inside the outer door on the east side is a bell which was made redundant when the current peal of eight was installed in 1925 (see Figure 3). It was cast at a foundry in Frome in 1695, and it weighs around 6 cwt. (c. 305 kilos).

Church bells have been rung to summon people to worship since times before the availability of accurate clocks. This church is not

Figure 3 Redundant bell replaced in 1925

just a historic building. It is the spiritual home of a fellowship of Christian believers who continue to meet here weekly to worship God and pray for their community, as has been done for centuries past. Bells are also pealed on important occasions, such as national celebrations, and at times of mourning (when bells will be muffled).

High in the north-west corner of the Porch is a door which once opened onto a staircase to the roof, and also to an upper door, which once would have led to a Palm Sunday Gallery. This door is about 50 years later than the rest of the Porch. The *Sarum Missal*, which was widely used in southern England, ordered that during the procession on Palm Sunday seven boys should sing from a high place on the south side of the Church.

It is still common for Christians to commemorate Palm Sunday, the day of Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem the week before Easter, by processing into the church. Palm Sunday marks the start of Holy Week, the time leading up to Jesus's death on the cross on Good Friday, and resurrection on Easter Sunday.

The wooden doors at the north end of the Porch (behind the glazed doors) were made from oak beams from the Tower, which were still sound, though more than 200 years old, when renovations were carried out in the latter part of the 19th century.

It is suggested that you make your way through these doors, across the South Aisle to the far pews, then turn right (eastward) and head to the high Gothic arch at the front of the Nave. Pause for a moment. This is the gateway to the oldest part of the building, the Crossing and the Chancel, which go back to Norman times. This is the point where much of the worship is conducted, where marriages are solemnised and where the dead are sometimes brought before burial or cremation.

The Crossing

It is suggested that you proceed into the Crossing, directly underneath the Bell Tower. Two Norman Arches survive, on the north and east sides (see Figures 4 and 5). There would have been four originally, but those on the

south and west were pulled out and replaced with much higher Gothic (pointed) arches. Note that there is a slight point at the top of both of the original arches, rather than the typical Norman rounded form. This is one factor in leading some to conclude that this part of the church was built in the late Norman to early Transitional period (pre-Gothic).

Figure 4 Original Norman arch to north of Crossing

Through the 1960s glazed panel in the northern arch can be seen the North Transept, which was separated by a screen to be used as a clergy vestry in the 1930s (not open to the public). The transepts date from an early development into a cruciform (cross-shaped) structure of the church, when the Nave and North and South Transepts were added. The South Transept, much enlarged later, probably in the 14th century, would originally have been similar in size and shape to the North Transept.

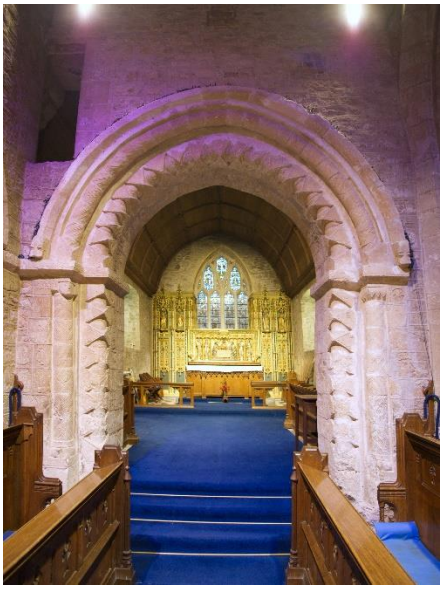


Figure 5 Original Norman arch to east of Crossing

To the north and south of the crossing are vicar, curate and choir stalls, installed early in the 20th century. St Andrew's no longer has a choir. Instead, today sung worship is led by an electric organ and a contemporary music group.

Singing has been a crucial component of worship since Old Testament times, where psalms would often be sung at religious festivals. The psalmist wrote, "He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God." (Psalm 40:2).

Before Jesus's arrest, he met with his disciples for a last meal. Then, the gospels tell us, "When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives." (Mark 14:26). Whilst musical styles have changed dramatically over the centuries, the urge to honour God with music and singing has been a fundamental aspect of the life of most Christians throughout history.

Two other interesting features can be seen in the Crossing. Firstly, in the east wall above the arch is a rectangular opening. This will be discussed further in the section on the Chancel. Secondly, behind the vicar's stall to the north and curate's stall to the south of the Crossing are two rings embedded into the walls (Figure 6). Much debate surrounds these. It was once thought that these were rare Sanctuary Rings, used in mediaeval times so a person fleeing from summary justice could take refuge in the Church, and by holding on to the Ring they would be safe until their case could be properly tried. However, more recently it has been suggested that these were more likely anchor points for lifting bells into the belfry above.

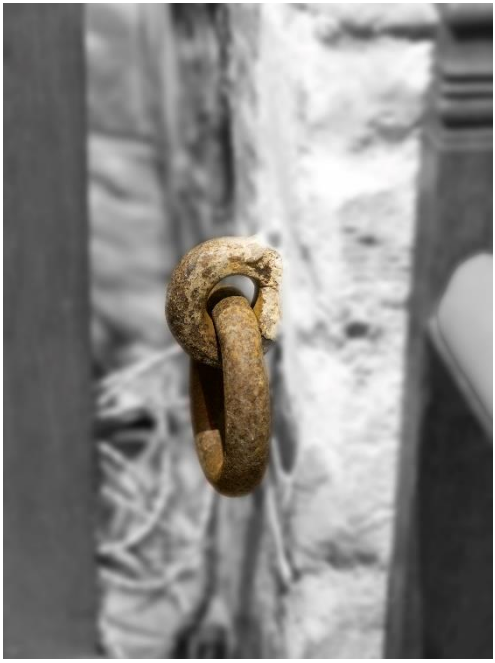


Figure 6 One of the supposed 'Sanctuary Rings', located behind the vicar's stall in the Crossing

The Crossing forms the central point of the cruciform (cross-shaped) layout of the church. Figure 7 shows an artist's impression of what the church might have looked like prior to further additions and extensions to the building.

Many churches were built in this format to mark the fact that Jesus Christ was executed by crucifixion. Christians believe that Jesus's death on the cross was the means by which God saved us from sin, shame and evil. Despite its

gruesome nature as a means of execution, the cross eventually became widely accepted as the primary symbol of Christianity.

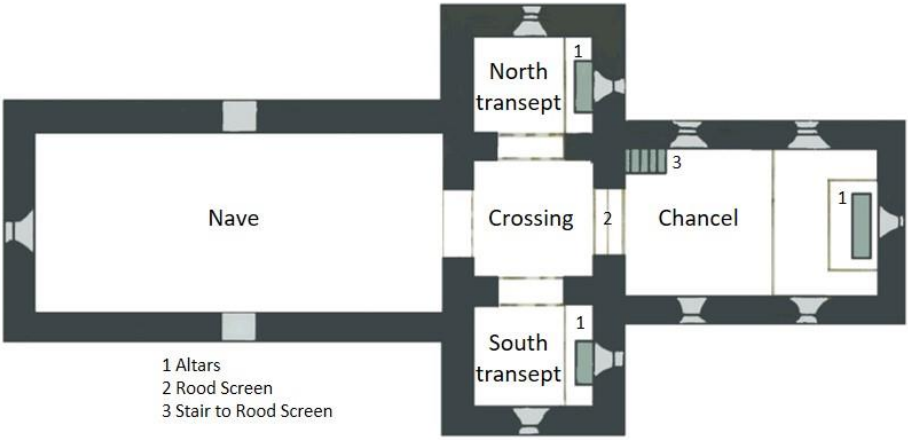


Figure 7 Artist's impression of early cruciform church from Norman period. Based on the 1926 illustration which hangs in the South Transept

The Chancel

If you are able, take the steps to the east up into the Chancel. This is undoubtedly the oldest remaining part of the church building. Nevertheless, the original Norman windows on the north and south walls were replaced with the current ones in the 15th century. Traces of the old window outlines can still be seen on either side of the Priest's Door on the south side. The Chancel was seen as the domain of the clergy, and was often separated from the rest of the church by a Rood Screen, which separated priests from laity (ordinary people). However, whatever screen had been in place

Figure 8 Opening to the Rood Loft (no longer present) between the Chancel and Crossing

would have been removed during the Reformation. Now turn back to face west and look up at the rectangular opening above the arch (Figure 8). Notice that there are the remains of two steps leading up to the opening. This was the approach to a Rood Loft dating back to pre-Reformation times, and would have provided access past the screen.

In the north wall of the Chancel is a doorway into the Choir Vestry, which was added in 1844. This is not open to the public.

Now turn back facing east towards the communion table and altar rail. This is one of the key locations within the church as it is the place where the sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated. The oak Communion Table and the Communion Rails, where communicants kneel to receive the Sacrament, are early 20th century.

On the evening before his crucifixion, Jesus met with his disciples and shared a meal with them, now known as the Last Supper. Whilst this was undoubtedly some form of Passover celebration (which Jews to this day celebrate each year to mark the Exodus of Israel from Egypt), Jesus reconfigured this for his followers as a commemoration of his death, with bread symbolising his broken body, and the cup of wine his shed blood. Bread and wine have been used by Christians as the perpetual remembrance of Jesus's death ever since, and the Eucharist or Holy Communion is celebrated each week in Anglican (Church of England) churches or benefices (groupings of local Anglican churches).

Behind the Communion Table is an ornamental screen known as a Reredos (Figure 9). This was installed in 1906, but in the style of the 15th century, when English woodwork was at its best. It represents the Supper at Emmaus, flanked on the left with the figures of Moses and Isaiah, and on the right David and Malachi. The side wings (not in the picture) show St. Andrew and St. Peter on the left, and St. Paul and St. Barnabas on the right.

On the evening of the day of Jesus's resurrection, the Gospel of Luke tells us that two men were walking from Jerusalem to a village called Emmaus. Jesus came alongside them but they did not recognise him. Once they arrived at their destination, they invited him into their home, where they offered him

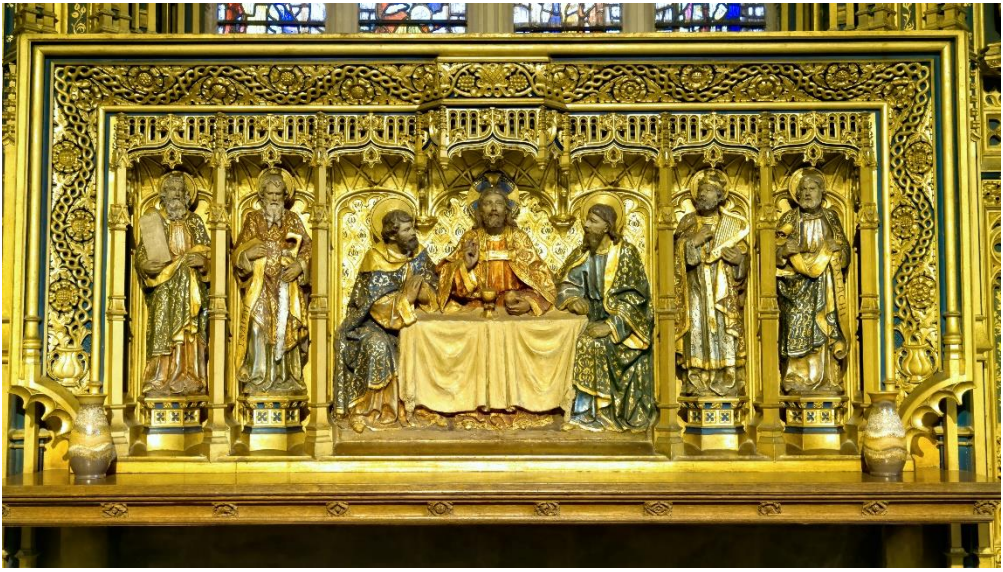


Figure 9 The ornate Reredos behind the Communion Table. The central panel depicts the supper at Emmaus.

food. It was only when he took the bread and blessed it (as he had done at the Last Supper) that they realised it was Jesus. This is one of the several encounters followers of Jesus had with him after the resurrection, which have convinced believers that Jesus did indeed rise from the dead. This is commemorated in the glorious call and response regularly used in church services on Easter Sunday - "Jesus Christ is risen! ***He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!****"*

The Nave

Turn and head west back through the Crossing and into the Nave, then turn back to look up at the west wall of the Crossing. Note the high, Gothic (pointed) arch, which replaced the original Norman arch in the 14th century (Figure 10). Notice the line of the original Nave roof in the wall above the arch. This demonstrates the original height of the Nave, before the roof was pulled down and replaced with a higher one in the 14th century. The length of the original Nave is unknown, but it is believed to have been extended to its current length in this development.

To the north side of the Gothic arch is a pulpit, which is relatively modern, but made using old wood, mainly Jacobean (Figure 11). It was moved from the north-west corner of the Crossing to its present position early in the 20th century, when the new Clergy and Choir Stalls were introduced into the Crossing.

Below the pulpit is the door which originally led to a Rood loft through the door above the pulpit, and provided access to the belfry. However, this door is now walled up. The belfry is now accessed from an external door adjacent to the clergy vestry.

Figure 10 The high Gothic west arch of the Crossing seen from the Nave

Figure 11 The Pulpit

To the south side of the western Chancel arch stands a brass lectern, introduced early in the 20th century, on which stands a church Bible in the Anglicised New International Version translation, which matches the Bibles located in the pews.

The reading of the Christian scriptures and preaching from the pulpit form an important component of the church's worship Sunday to Sunday. The Bible, in both Old and New Testaments, remains foundational to Christian theology, and together with tradition and reason forms the three-fold essence of Anglican thought. "All Scripture is

God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Each week clergy or Readers (lay ministers) attempt to provide enlightenment on the meaning and application of the Bible to the congregation.

Move further west in the aisle of the Nave and take in the scene. The arcade of arches on the south side of the Nave is 14th century, and slightly to the south of the former Norman wall which they replaced (i.e. the Nave was widened). The pillars are quite unusual in that they have no capitals, but a series of corbels instead. The north wall sports two window panels in the perpendicular style, which were installed in the 15th century, together with the west window of the Nave. Later in the 15th century the three clerestory windows above the south arcade of the Nave were opened up.

Underneath the more westerly perpendicular window in the north wall of the Nave are two memorial plaques to those soldiers of Clevedon who fell in the two World Wars of the 20th century, and a book of remembrance (Figure 12). These form a focus for the community to lay wreaths to remember them, and all who have died in conflicts since, as they commemorate Remembrance Sunday each November.

Figure 12 Commemorative wreaths placed under the World War memorial plaques on the north wall of the Nave

'Caring for our community with God's love' is the motto of St Andrew's church. As the Parish Church of Clevedon, the annual service of remembrance is just one of the many ways in which the church provides spiritual and pastoral care for the town community.

On the west wall of the Nave, either side of the west window, are two plaques on which are written the Ten Commandments.

In the Old Testament these were given by God to Moses on two tablets of stone (Exodus 20; 24:12). Christians still hold to the importance of these commandments, although Jesus taught that all of the Law of Moses (the first five books of the Bible) was summed up in two commands: to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" and "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-38). Love is the defining principle of all true Christian living.

The Nave contains the bulk of the seating for the congregation, currently in the form of wooden pews. The historical value of these should not be overstated. Almost all of these are Victorian or later additions to the internal fabric of the church.

The South Aisle

Figure 13 The South Aisle, seen from the Nave through the Arcade of Arches

Head back eastwards in the Nave and turn south back towards the Porch, stopping just before the door. This is the South Aisle (Figure 13), which was added at the same time that the Nave was extended and widened, and its roof raised. Just to the west side of the main door is a board recording the names of the Rectors and Vicars of Clevedon from 1331 until the present time (Figure 14). Apart from the most recent clergy listed, the names are taken from the Hugo Manuscript in the British Library. The panel of teak on which the names are inscribed came from H.M.S. Lion, Admiral Beatty's flagship at the Battle of Jutland in 1916. The frame is made of oak, formerly in the Belfry of the Church.

Figure 14 Plaque in the South Aisle listing Clergy of St Andrew's

Figure 15 The old font in the South Aisle

The Church of England operates a three-fold hierarchy of leadership – bishops, priests and deacons, which it continued from that of the Roman Catholic Church after its split from Rome in the English Reformation. Vicars, clergy or priests are those who stand in the gap between God and people – to bring God to the people and people to God. The Reformation also taught the priesthood of all believers, and the aim of all at St Andrew's Church is to bring the light of Christ to all people.

Head to the west end of the South Aisle. The large octagonal structure is the old font, probably dating from the

14th century, although the wooden cover is much later (see Figure 15). The name comes from the same Latin root as the word 'fountain'. Its purpose is to contain the water used in baptism, and a font is usually placed either near the door or at the west end of a church, symbolising the way that confession of faith in baptism signifies entry into the Church of Christ. The old font is no longer used. A new, free-standing font was dedicated in December 2016, and when needed is placed between the pulpit and the lectern so that the baptismal party can gather around and be seen by the congregation.

Baptism is the sacrament which welcomes people into the membership of the church, whether as adults, or commonly in the Church of England, as infants brought by parents or guardians. While adults are able to make promises for themselves, when infants are baptised, parents and godparents promise to bring the child up in the faith of Christ. Confirmation is the rite which takes place once a child has grown sufficiently to make their own decision to follow Christ, thus confirming the faith into which their parents had them baptised.

The South Transept (St Thomas Chapel)

Figure 16 Several of the plaques in the South Transept commemorating deceased members of the Elton family

Turn back east and head past the main door into the South Transept. This is also called the St Thomas Chapel, after Thomas Becket, who was martyred in Canterbury Cathedral on 29 December 1170. The South Transept was enlarged during

the 14th century by Sir John de Clyveden, who also built Clevedon Court in the reign of Edward II (1307-27), at the same time as the reconfiguring of the Nave and building of the South Aisle, and was turned into a chapel for the Lords of Clevedon. The Elton family became Lords of the Manor in 1709, and have a family vault in this chapel. Sir Charles Elton, at the time he began the restoration of the church in 1844, handed over the chapel to the Parish, and renounced all rights therein.

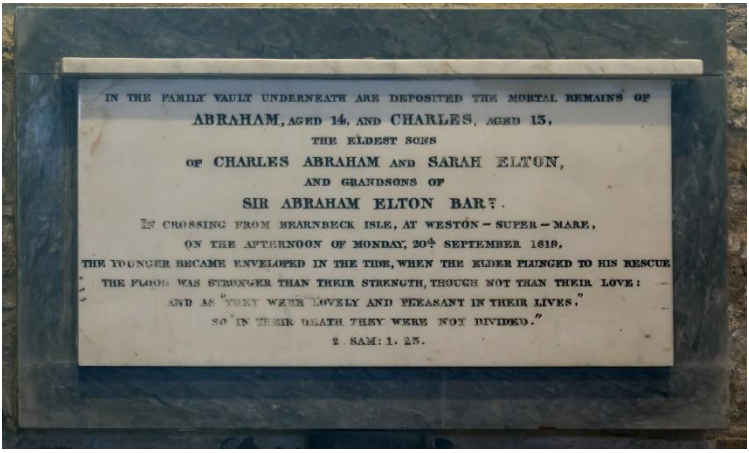


Figure 17 Plaque commemorating the two teenage Elton boys who drowned in the Severn Estuary in 1819

Several memorials on the walls commemorate members of the Elton family (some of which appear in Figure 16). The most poignant is the one below the south window to two boys, Abraham and Charles Elton, aged only 14 and 13, who in 1819 were swept away by the tide when crossing from Birnbeck Island at Weston-super-Mare, where the Old Pier now stands (Figure 17). Their bodies were later recovered the opposite side of the Channel, and they were found locked in each other's arms. How appropriate are the words on the Tablet: "The flood was stronger than their strength, though not than their love", and "They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided (2 Samuel 1:23)."

The most famous of the memorials must surely be that to Arthur Henry Hallam, the very great friend of Alfred Lord Tennyson, who had been in love with Tennyson's sister (Figure 18). In memory Tennyson wrote his epic poem, 'In Memoriam A.H.H.'. Hallam had been travelling on the Continent with his father, Henry Hallam (related to the Eltons by marriage), in 1833 at the age

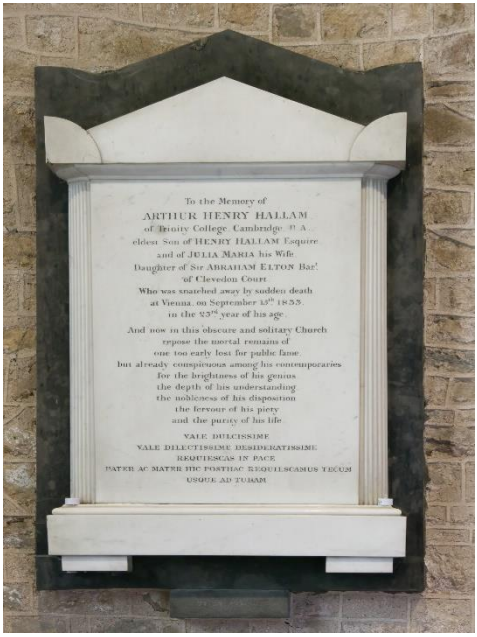


Figure 18 Memorial in the South Transept to Arthur Henry Hallam, friend of Alfred Lord Tennyson, whose untimely death aged 22 prompted Tennyson to write his epic poem, 'In Memoriam A. H. H.'

of 22, when he suddenly died in his hotel room in Vienna of a congenital aneurism. Both Arthur and his father Henry are interred in the Elton vault.

It is human nature to remember, mourn and commemorate those loved ones whom we have lost. Here in St Andrew's Church many find a place of comfort to gather for funeral or memorial services. Christians feel the absence of loved ones who have died as keenly as everyone else. However, intermingled within our grief, is a deep sense of hope that death is not the end, that God has something better prepared for us beyond our mortal lives. In vivid, poetic imagery, the prophet Isaiah wrote that God "will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death for ever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces" (Isaiah 25:7-8). Citing this and other verses from the Hebrew scriptures, the apostle Paul, in describing the hope that comes from the resurrection of Jesus said, "Death has been swallowed up in victory.' 'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death,

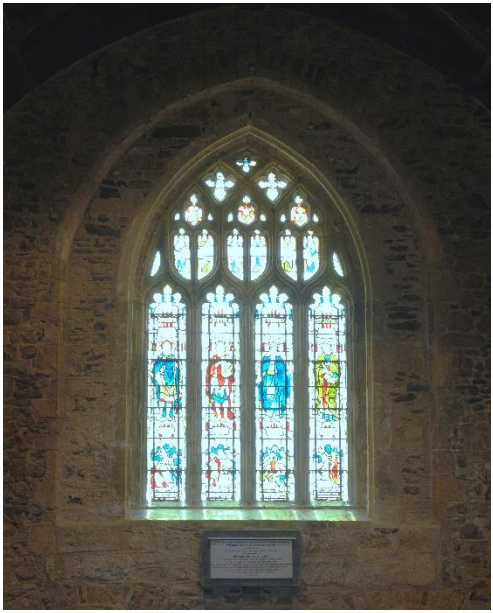


Figure 19 South wall of the South Transept, showing the outline of the earlier window, replaced in the 15th century

is your sting?' … thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:54, 55, 57)

Turn south to face the south wall of the South Transept. Notice the outline of the much larger original window dating from when the transept was enlarged in the 13th – 14th century. This was replaced with the smaller window during the renovations of the 15th century (Figure 19).

Figure 20 The high Gothic arch though which the Crossing can be seen from the South Transept

Now turn and face north. In front of you is the high Gothic southern arch of the Crossing, which replaced the original Norman arch, probably in the 14th century (Figure 20). In front of this, on either side, are pipes remaining from the 1905 pipe organ which was later decommissioned.

Ahead of the screen between the South Transept and Crossing is a table containing candles and prayer cards. During various seasons of the year there may also be one or more of several other themed prayer stations around the church, located in this transept. Above all, this church is a place of prayer, as it has been for around 800 years.

Prayer remains an important part of the life of the church, both corporately and for individual Christians. We believe that God can answer prayers offered in humility and submission to God's will. Is there something troubling in your life that you need help with? Why not light a candle at the prayer station, and if you so wish, write a prayer and place it in the box provided. Prayer cards are reviewed on a regular basis and members of our church pray for the issues raised on them.

On the west wall of the South Transept, in addition to memorial plaques, can be found an artist's impression of the changes to the church through the ages, drafted by Roland Paul in 1926. An adaptation of the lower part of this is shown in Figure 21 (the upper part is represented in Figure 7).

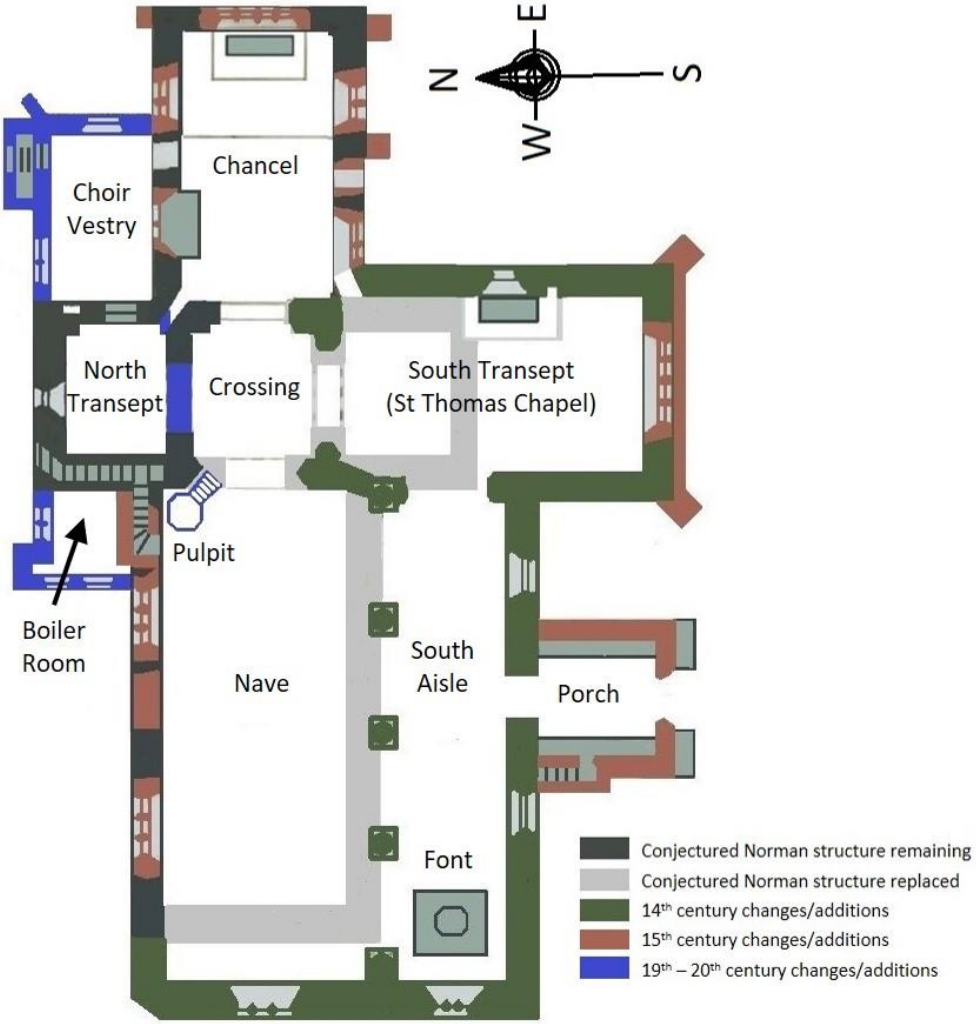


Figure 21 Plan of St Andrew's Church as it has changed over the centuries, adapted from the 1926 illustration which hangs in the South Transept

A Prayer for St Andrew's Church

Almighty God, we ask you to bless your church in this place.

Here may the weary find rest, the sorrowful find comfort, and the doubting find faith.

Here may the lost be found, the weak be strengthened, and the faithful be encouraged;

and all in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.