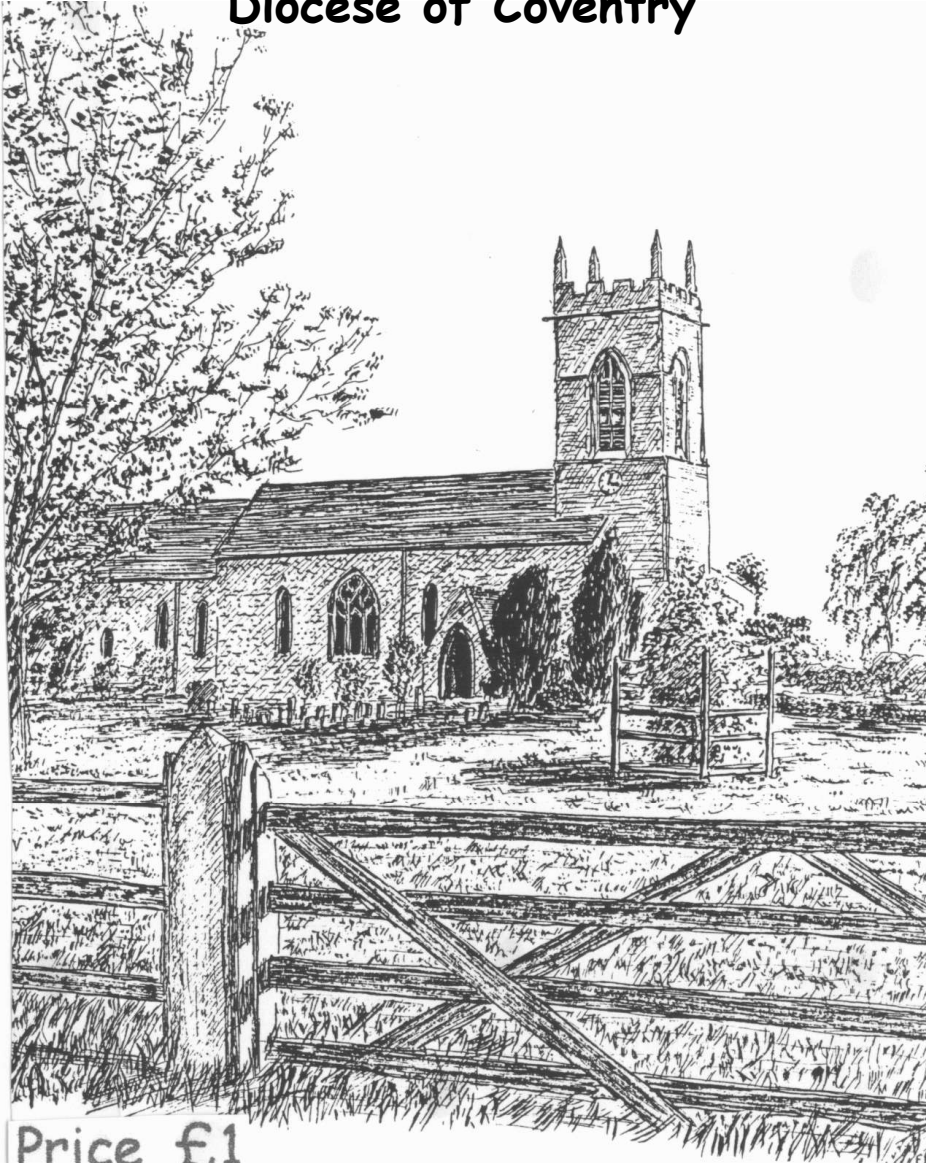


**St Matthew's Church
Salford Priors
Diocese of Coventry**



Price £1

WELCOME

We hope that you will enjoy your visit to St Matthew's and sense something more than just an interesting past. This is not just a beautiful Grade I listed building, but a place of prayer and praise, a place where people of all ages have and still do come to find God and learn about His love. For the God who was worshipped here when William the Conqueror reigned, is still worshipped here today. People, old and young, are passing on their faith in this place.

This glorious inheritance of St. Matthew's, Salford Priors is a building where people have been worshipping God for over 1000 years. We hope that at some time during your visit, you will be able to spend a few moments quietly reflecting on God's love for you and to enjoy the peace away from the cares of the day.

You may like to use this prayer:

Father God,

Thank you, Lord for this wonderful building and for all the people who have worshipped you here down through the ages. I pray that your Holy Spirit will help me to know your love and presence in my life. I give you my past my present and my future, trusting that your love is unchanging. I pray for your blessing on all those I love and for your strength for today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

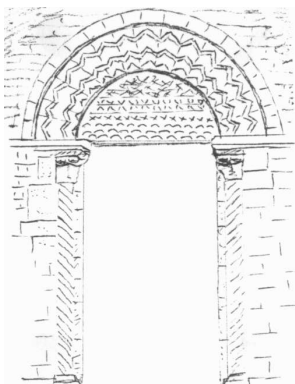
May God bless you today and always.

June 2007 - revised 2010

NORMAN BEGINNINGS

Although the actual date of erection of the church is uncertain, in 1066 it passed into the hands of William the Conqueror, who, as mentioned in his *General Survey* (The Domesday Book), gave the church and the lands of Salford Magna to a nun named Levitha. It was certainly Norman and may have been of Saxon origin.

In 1122, at Kenilworth, Geoffrey de Clinton founded an Augustinian Priory. Levitha gave the property to this new Priory and the district became known as Priors Salford and later Salford Priors. The Prior of Kenilworth appointed the Vicar who also ministered to the people of Salford Minor. Later, the Abbot of Evesham erected a country house for the use of the Benedictine monks of Evesham (where Salford Hall now stands) and Salford Minor became known as Abbot's Salford. In 1539, St Mary's Abbey Kenilworth was dissolved and in 1546, the benefice of Salford Priors passed into private patronage. Later, Sir Simon Clarke became patron, leaving his mark as he beautified it in many ways. Samuel Ellis Garrard eventually held the patronage and he passed it over to the Peache Trust in about 1860.

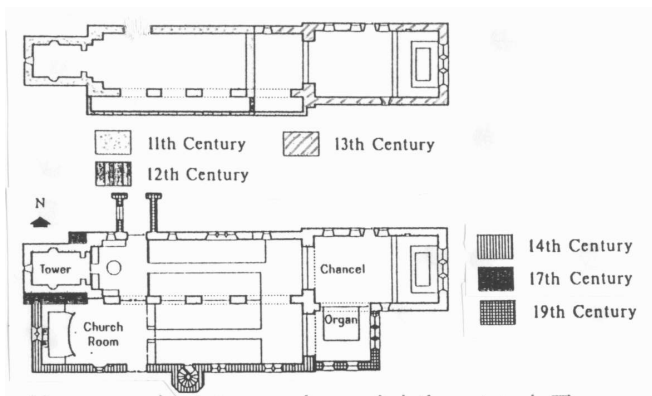


THE PORCH

On approaching the building, you come to a porch made of local Lias stone, a Victorian protection for the splendid Norman doorway, built of Oolite stone. The different patterns reflect the workmen's creative talents. The wrought iron gate was to keep out the sheep!

THE BUILDING GROWS OVER THE YEARS

Towards the end of the 12th Century, the monks enlarged the church by building the South Aisle, extending it by six feet. The three arches cut into the South wall show the change from Norman



architecture and are slightly pointed. They are unusual because normally the piercing of the South wall would have been followed by the erection of rounded pillars supporting the archways whereas here the arches are built upon the original wall. Perhaps there was less risk of the roof collapsing this way! It was further widened in the 14th Century.

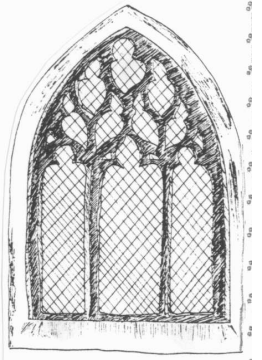
Entering the South aisle, you would have seen at the East end, an altar under a window where at present a Communion rail is placed under an arch. A stone piscina (a shallow basin) marks the place. Another piscina, possibly belonging to a one-time chantry chapel, is to be found in the South wall at the west end of the aisle, now within the Church Room.

THE NAVE

Over the Norman doorway is a tablet recording six generations of the Cope family from 1670 to 1922.

In about 1873, under Reverend Samuel Garrard (1860-1901), the north wall of the nave was rebuilt and reroofed. Two 13th century lancet windows were placed on either side of the door, the one on the right being of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10, verse 29). There had been smaller windows there, whose stone frames are now incorporated in the outside of the West wall of the South aisle.

The large **Flamboyant window** in the centre of the North wall is only one of about twelve to be found in the country. The flame-like forms of the tracery are characteristic of this style. 'Flamboyant' describes the Gothic architecture, which prevailed in France in the 15th and 16th centuries. A Victorian copy of this window can be found at Harvington Church.



To the right of the flamboyant window is a memorial to the Eversheds, characteristically with two steam traction engines, depicting the famous local agricultural machinery industry of Bomford & Evershed, now known as Bomford Turner.

To the right, a tall lancet window similar to those in the chancel depicts Gethsemane (Luke 22 verse 39), in memory of William Robert Smith, 1864, with a brass memorial underneath to his wife and son.

Further on is a small memorial in brass with enamelled shield to George Whittington Raikes of Conway Cottage, Dunnington, Lord Hertford's agent for the Ragley Estate.

On the South wall of the nave are notable memorials of men from Abbot's Salford, one near the pulpit to John Stanford (1640), of whom a later descendant became Archdeacon of Coventry in the early 1950's.

To the right of the arch over the pulpit is a memorial to the Andrews family. Above it there is a diamond shaped brass memorial to the Reverend Samuel Garrard, vicar 1860-1901, his wife and daughter. He was responsible for not only building Salford and Dunnington schools, but also a great deal of repair and restoration of the Church building. In his time, for example, the north wall of the nave was rebuilt, the entire Church reroofed, the floors levelled and laid with tiles. The Church was re-seated throughout, the old benches of the nave being reused for the south aisle. The cost was raised by voluntary contribution.

THE CHANCEL

This was added to the East end of the extended Nave about 1250. On the North wall, in a 13th century lancet window is the raising of Lazarus (John 11, verse 38), to the memory of John Slatter, 1867.

To the right of that is a window depicting Jesus as the Good Shepherd with a lamb in his arms (John 10, verse 27), in memory of Sydney Laurence Boulton in 1853, the 9 month old son of Thomas Boulton, vicar of this parish and of Bidford. There is a memorial window to his wife in Bidford Church.

Either side of the Sanctuary step is a pair of windows in memory of John Henry Slatter in 1910; on the north of Jesus with infant and child (Mark 10, verse 16), and on the south of St. John (an eagle overshadows him) with quill pen and book, presumably having written his name in the 'Lamb's Book of Life' (Revelation 21, verse 27).

THE SANCTUARY

In 1937, the plain glass of the east window was replaced by stained glass in memory of the Reverend Samuel Garrard, his wife and daughter. The green cross of the Crucifixion (Luke 23, verse 31) in the centre panel speaks of life. The rising and setting of the sun bring to mind the words of the psalmist (Psalm 113, verse 3): 'From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised'. The panels on either side are of Jesus' mother, Mary, and St. John.

THE ORGAN

In 1893, when a new organ chamber was made on the south side of the chancel, the windows on that side were removed and incorporated into the new extension and the organ moved into it from the west end gallery. This gallery had been erected in 1738 at the end of the nave. Probably a choir led the singing from there then, with the help of musical instruments. The organ, removed from the gallery, was built in 1877 by Nicholson of Worcester. The oak choir stalls were added in 1894.

THE CLARKE MEMORIALS

On the north wall of the sanctuary is a large monument in memory of Sir Simon's first wife, Margaret Alderford (daughter of John Alderford, Lord of the Manor of Abbot's Salford), and two of their infant sons, erected in 1631.

In the niche is the recumbent figure of one of their children with a toy sword hanging from his shoulder. Around the four sides are sixteen shields bearing arms and labels that tell how Ralph Woodchurch was keeper of the tower of London in the reign of William Rufus; that Thomas had married the daughter of the Lord Mayor of London 'in King John's time'; and that a change in the ancestral name from Woodchurch of Woodchurch in Kent, to Clarke was made in the 14th century, thus introducing into the family fortune a large inheritance brought by the bride of that name; and that Sir Simon had in his veins the blood of ancestors who had fought with Edward I and with the Black Prince.

His second wife, Lady Dorothy, erected two monuments. The first is to her grandchild, Margaret. She was three and a half years of age when she died in 1640. Her memorial is placed over the priest's door in the chancel, where it was erected by 'her loving grandmother'. The other monument, in the south aisle, is to Alece (Alice) Morris, of a servant family, in gratitude for her service of 21 years.

Lady Dorothy herself died in 1669 and Sir Fulwer Skipworth, her nephew, erected a large monument to her memory on the south side of the sanctuary. She was the daughter of Thomas Hobson of Cambridge, a famous carrier who is reported to have allowed the hire of his horses only in strict rotation, refusing to allow his customers to choose. Hence the phrase 'Hobson's choice'.

Sir Simon Clarke died in 1651 and, along with Margaret and Lady Dorothy, is buried in the sanctuary. His memorial is a stone coffin lid, which originally covered his grave, but when the floor was raised in 1873, the lid was removed to the churchyard. In 1937 Reverend Jack Thomson (Vicar 1936-1944) uncovered it and brought it back

into the Church - it is now fixed to the wall near the south door in the Church Room.

The oak pulpit, dated 1616 inside, was moved from the north to the south side of the chancel arch in 1874. Its large book rest suggests it was the 'reading desk' part of a 'two decker', the minister having to ascend three or four steps to the upper deck for the sermon. The carved panels are probably 17th century and show the Nativity, the Crucifixion and the Ascension.

The brass eagle lectern was first used in 1900.

THE SOUTH AISLE

In 1937 a new High Altar in oak displaced the Jacobean table altar, which was then placed in the South Aisle, creating once again a chapel there. The communion rail was made from timber from the demolished Worcester Jail in 1938.

The Litany desk was made from old belfry timbers in 1947.

A complete new timber floor incorporating electrical heating was laid throughout the nave and south aisle in 1963.

THE PEACE BELL

Just to the left of the communion rail, the old no.6 bell is displayed as an example of 18th century bell founding. The new Peace Bell commemorates the fallen of the Second World War from this parish.

At the East End of the south wall is a memorial to John Alderford, father in law to Sir Simon, with four shields above it.

Next to it is a window in memory of Caroline Probert in 1869, the wife of Henry Brandis Slatter, squire and churchwarden, depicting a mother with a child at her knee drinking from a bowl on the left, said to be Hagar and Ishmael (*Genesis 21, verse 19*). On the right are Paul and Silas being released from prison, with the jailer asking what he must do to be saved, to which they replied: 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved' (*Acts 16*).

The next window is for Henry Brandis Slatter in 1872, showing the angels telling the shepherds of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem (Luke 2, verse 8); the crucifixion on Calvary (Luke 23, verse 32) and the ascended Lord of Heaven and Earth (Luke 24, verse 50).

To the right of these windows is a display of the shields and arms of Sir Simon, taken from the old pulpit.

Memorials to James Mitchell and his wife and the Rawlins family complete the walk.

THE CHURCH ROOM

The southwest corner of the Church was enclosed in 1991 to form a Church Room. It incorporates the space used formerly as the choir-vestry and in days gone by had been the Parish School Room founded by William Perkins.

The lower part of the South Aisle is the heavy wooden screen from the former choir vestry. In its new position it is surmounted by a light screen incorporating stained glass panels which had been cramped in the small openings of the older screen ever since they had been recovered from the former All Saints, Emscote, Warwick.

The figures are, from left to right:

Top row: St Ninian, St Edward (King), St Germanus, St Edmund (King), St Dubricius (Bishop of Warwick), St Winifred.

Lower row: St Thomas, St Edith, St Andrew, and St Dinoth.

So the first archway of the nave became a new doorway into the room, and gives a welcoming appearance on entering the Church. To the right of the doorway hangs a framed list of those ministers who have faithfully served God through the ages.

The Font was moved to a natural position just inside the main entrance to the Church. This area was opened up by the removal of pews to form a baptistery and open space.

THE BELLS

By 1735, the tower contained a ring of 5 bells, recast by Richard Sanders of Bromsgrove into a ring of 6. In 1836, Thomas Mears of

Whitechapel cast 2 treble bells, work being carried out at their Gloucester branch foundry, previously belonging to the famous Rudhall family of bell founders. This made a ring of 8 as at present.

In 1945, the bells were recast and rehung by Gillett and Johnston of Croydon. The old no. 6 bell was retained and stands in the south aisle as an example of 18th century bell founding. It was replaced by a new bell - the Peace Bell - to commemorate the fallen in the Second World War from this parish.

In 1735 the new ring of 6 bells cost £91.

In 1945 the new ring of bells cost £1,143.

AROUND THE OUTSIDE

Leaving by the Norman doorway, turn right and notice the stone work beneath the guttering is a slightly different shade from about 6 layers beneath the roof. This is because the roof was raised in Reverend Samuel Garrard's time. In fact, the whole of this nave wall was taken down and rebuilt and when the windows were put back, they were at a higher level than before.

Further along is the chancel, built in the 13th century, with its priest's doorway. Red sandstone has been inserted here and in other parts of the building (brought from Kenilworth where St. Nicholas' Church is wholly built from it) and used by the monks for repairs.

Going around to the East End, an arch of stones is set on end over the east window. This shows the height of the chancel before it was increased in 1874.

On the south wall of the chancel, a window has been filled in to accommodate the internal monument to Lady Dorothy Clarke.

Further along the eaves are mediaeval gargoyles (adorned waterspouts) of quaint designs. The windows on this side are 14th century.

Just past the peaceful **Garden of Remembrance** is a semi octagonal tower, which may have served as a beacon tower to guide travellers across the flooded meadows and rivers Arrow and Avon.

Or it may have simply been a way up to the roof and bell tower as it is today. It has a stone roof supported on a Norman column. Another theory is that the turret tower, being older than the South aisle, may originally have been a stair turret for access to the outside door of the main tower, standing adjacent to it, then later been removed and rebuilt into the South Aisle.



The statue in the niche of the tower is of St Dubicius, once known as Bishop of Warwick. Reverend Harold Burton brought this, along with the stained glass above the Church Room, from the demolished Church of All Saints, Emscote, in 1967.

The 14th century pointed arch doorway may have been used as the main entrance for common use. The nearby smaller doorway was probably inserted in the 17th century for use as the Parish School Room when the tailor, William Perkins, bequeathed money for the local children's education. This bequest helped to build Salford School and it still bears his name.

Going around the tower, '1633' is inscribed in one of the stones. Sir Simon had the tower heightened and widened then and the two north pinnacles bear his heraldic arms.

A new clock was installed in 1876 and its song as it chimes the quarter is:

'Lord through this hour
Be Thou our guide,
So by Thy power,
No foot shall slide.'

The original burial ground is on the South side. In 1939, a portion of the Vineyard glebe land was consecrated and added to the north side, the outer portion later becoming the car park. In 1985, an extension onto glebe land to the east of the churchyard on the

South side of the Church was consecrated, this part is maintained by the Parish Council. It contains a rose garden and wooden bench in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales, who died in 1997.

THE MILLENNIUM

In 2000 AD, a new Millennium Yew sapling of ancient stock (from the Ulcombe Yew in Kent, known to be 2000 years old) was planted to the south side of Church. A Millennium banner also flew from the south side of the tower, proclaiming 2000 years since Jesus birth. A smaller replica was placed in Church and it now hangs above the Church room doors. As a special Millennium project, St Matthew's decided to visit and to offer a copy of the 'Jesus' video to every home in the parish.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Church stands as a wonderful testament to people's faith, service and generosity over the centuries. therefore, the information collected here is only a small part of the whole. However, two former incumbents in particular worked to gather it together and this contains some of their findings:

'The tower in the Vineyard' by Reverend J.A.Thomson

'Flesh and Blood' by Reverend Harold A. Burton

The view of St. Matthew's in 1986 on the cover is by Mr Frank Munns, (Abbeyfield Studios, the Mews Gallery, 22a Coventry Road, Narborough, Leics. LE9 568) who kindly gave permission for its use.

The other drawings in this booklet are by Alf Boston and Anna Tash.

St Matthew's website: www.stmatthewssalfordpriors.org.uk