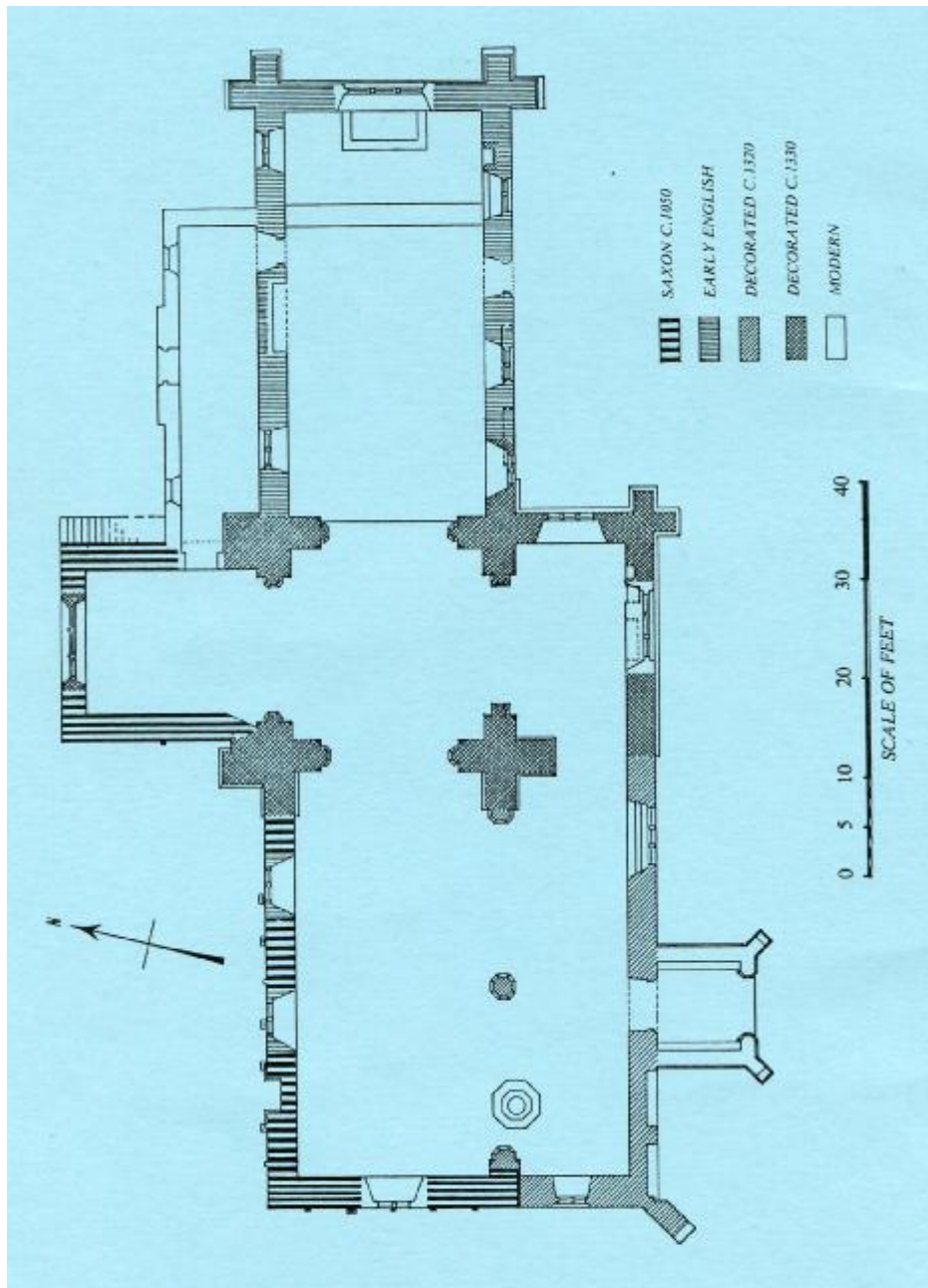




A Guide to
ST. PETER'S CHURCH
STANTON LACY

By Peter Klein

1989 Edition





WELCOME TO ST PETER'S CHURCH

You may be a visitor, or a resident. You may be a regular worshipper or someone interested in old buildings, architecture, history, music, or stained glass... Whatever your interest you are welcome. We hope that this small guide will help you appreciate our beautiful church. Take your time as you journey around it. Remember that it is not an ancient monument but the building in which the Christian Community worships and prays today, as it has done down the centuries.

We hope that you will agree that the building has been lovingly cared for over the years. We for our part are trying to continue that care so that it will be available to future generations for worship and inspiration, and to enjoy.

We hope that you will find peace here, come away refreshed, and take home with you many happy memories of your visit.

St Peters Church
Stanton Lacy
April 1989



An old legend from Saxon times tells how Saint Milburgha, daughter of Merewald of Mercia, founded the priory of Much Wenlock in about 680 AD. She was a noted beauty, and although she had taken vows of chastity she attracted many would-be suitors. One of these, a Welsh prince, forcing his attentions on her, obliged Milburgha to flee towards Wenlock. At one point in her flight she crossed the river Corve and being hard pressed by her pursuer fell down on her knees and prayed for deliverance. The river, we are told, immediately swelled into an impassable torrent and saved Milburgha from her admirer; whereupon in gratitude she founded a church on the spot which was later to be called Stanton Lacy.

Whatever the precise truth of this story, there can be little doubt that St Milburgha had much to do with the spreading of Christianity in Shropshire at a date so soon after the death of her grandfather the pagan King Penda of Mercia. Does the legend however explain the position of Stanton Lacy church? While perhaps Milburgha was saved by the River Corve – it can still become a torrent overnight after heavy rain – it is tempting to believe that, in the light of Pope Gregory's instructions to St Augustine in 601 AD, an established pagan sacred site was to be consecrated and adapted for Christian use wherever possible to preserve continuity; a shrewd piece of insight when one thinks upon it. The evidence that this might have been the case here is slight but worth pointing out.

As at the Saxon church at Diddlebury just over four miles away, Stanton Lacy appears to have once had a circular churchyard; although today all that remains is the one half to the south, bordered by the road, since Church Farm appears to have encroached upon the other from the north. On the far side of the river around Old Field, within a mile of the church, are the remains of tumuli of which there were originally about twenty in number. Attached to this, close to the village of Bromfield, is a pagan and Christian Saxon cemetery, parts of which have recently been excavated prior to destruction by gravel working.

In Roman times a villa or farm estate was situated about 500 yards to the north of the church site, slight remains of which were found in 1910 during drainage operations. Intensive agriculture almost certainly continued throughout the Saxon period until, at the time of the Domesday Book in 1086, *Stantun* was at the centre of the richest and most productive land in Shropshire, amply demonstrated by the number of plough-teams, and its population. This provided the wealth which by the mid-11th century had built a large cruciform church, much of which survives today in the north and west walls of the nave. At the Conquest, Stanton had been held by a Saxon freeman Siward, probably “the rich man of Shropshire” Siward son of Ethelgar who, according to Ordericus Vitalis, was in the service of the Earl Roger de Montgomery and had also been involved in the founding of the church of St Peter outside the gate at Shrewsbury, which later became the site of the abbey church.

By the time of Domesday however Stanton was held by the de Lacy family, the first of whom, Walter de Lacy, was one of the heroes of the Battle of Hastings. We are also told that there were then two priests here, and that de Lacy had given two-thirds of the tithes to the monastery of St Peter at Hereford which he had founded shortly before.

Walter’s son Roger, who succeeded him, was banished in 1095 by William II and the manor given to the younger brother Hugh who helped establish the Augustinian priory at Llanthony. It is Llanthony Priory that shortly after 1103 was given the advowson, that is the right to nominate the priest to the benefice. Although the principal priory was later moved to Gloucester, the association with Llanthony remained up until the dissolution of the monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII; and as late as 1733 the village was referred to as Stanton Llanthony.

On the death of the last of the de Lacys, another Walter, in 1241, the estate was divided between his two granddaughters, one of whom, Maud, was the wife of Geoffrey de Geneville. Their granddaughter Joan inherited the manor on her marriage to the notorious Roger de Mortimer, first Earl of March, who was executed for high treason in 1330. The powerful Mortimer family were

responsible for enlarging a number of local churches and endowing chantry chapels, and it is highly likely that at least the tower and the south transept at Stanton Lacy are their work.

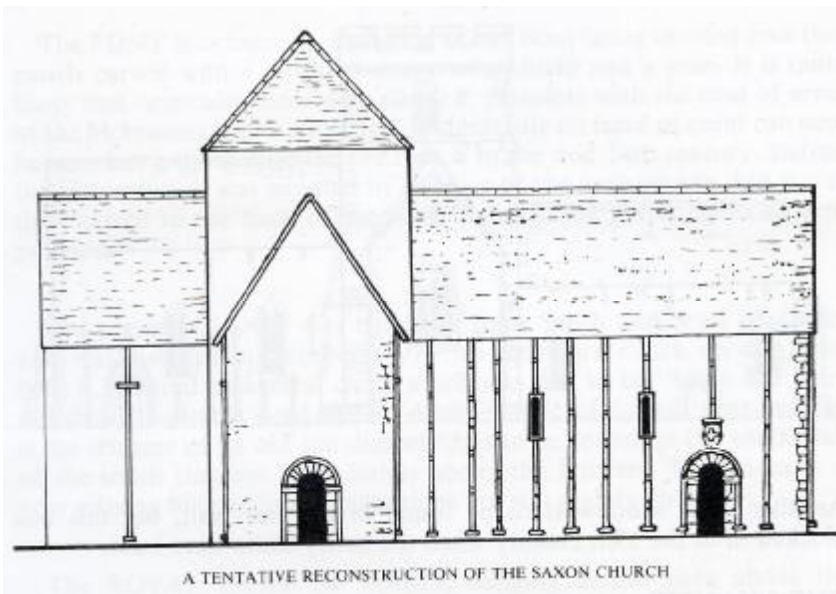
The Earldom merged with the Crown under Edward IV and the manor remained in Royal hands until 1561. In 1624 it was acquired by the Craven family who remained the patrons of the living until the mid-19th century when the patronage passed to the family of the present Earl of Plymouth.



THE NAVE AND NORTH TRANSEPT

To see the earliest portions of the church, walk around the outside and look at the north and west walls of the nave and at the north transept. They are decorated with lesenes or pilaster strips showing that they are Saxon work dating from the middle of the eleventh century. Notice the tall, narrow proportions of the nave and transept, also the long and short pattern in the pilaster strips.

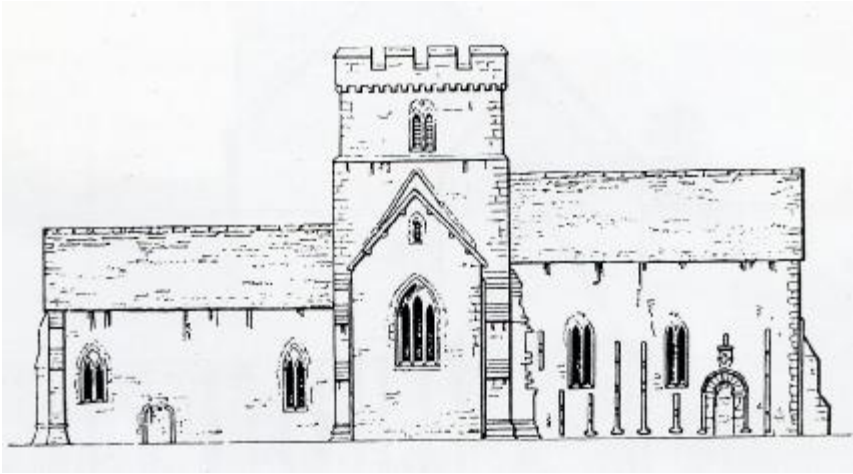
This is all that remains of what was certainly a cruciform church, with another transept on the south side and a small chancel of similar proportions. The church may well have had a squat tower at this time, a continuation of the nave and on the site of the present tower, although only archeology can ever confirm this. The transepts or *porticus* served as chapels, each having an entrance door in their outer walls. The remains of one of these doors can be seen on the inside of the north wall of the surviving porticus, now the vestry, in the form of three voussoirs, although it is only just detectable on the outside. These, together with fragments of moulding on the south wall of the 14th century south



transept, show the doors to have been very similar to that in the north wall of the nave.

The roll in the moulding around the north door shows some Norman influence and indicates a date not long before the Conquest. Above it is a crude but pleasing cross surmounted by a stone, carved with four pellets, which serves as a base for the vertical pilaster strip above. The pilaster decoration is not as complex at Stanton Lacy as that on the towers of the churches of Earl's Barton and Barton-on-Humber, but that on the tower at Barnack in Northamptonshire is perhaps closest in style. There is also an appreciable difference between the pilasters on the transept and those of the nave, suggesting that there may have been slightly different periods of construction. Another feature, hitherto unremarked upon, is the presence of small stones which appear to have been used as packing on either side of the pilasters and suggesting that these may have been inserted into earlier undecorated walling. The surface between the pilasters would originally have been covered by a layer of plaster but this had been deliberately removed by 1846. At a later date, the nave walls were rebuilt from a uniform level and the strips truncated and not replaced.

In the transept two windows were built into the north wall, one of which was a small single-splay Norman light inserted high up in the north-eastern corner. This and the door were perhaps blocked up simultaneously when the surviving north window, with its triple lancet form and sunk chamfer moulding, was inserted in the early 14th century.



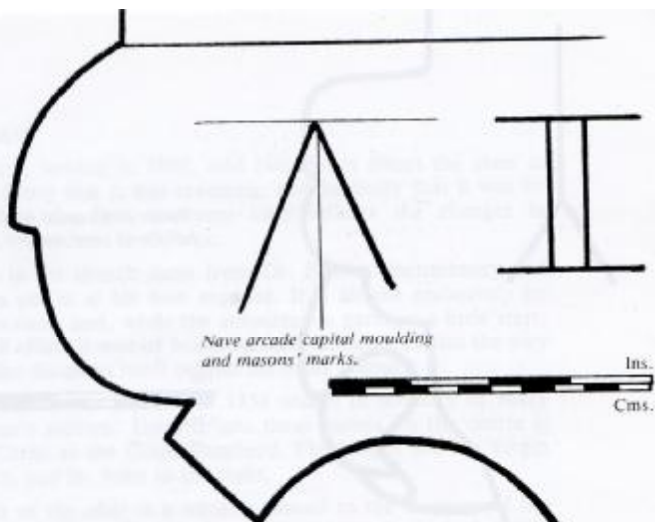
Another large window is to be found in the east wall, but this was blocked in in the 19th century when the belfry stairs were built.

THE CHANCEL

The first major change to the Saxon church took place when the old and probably cramped Saxon chancel was demolished and replaced by a large new one which is as wide and as long as the present nave. This probably took place during the Early English period and the half-round string course in the east wall and the four buttresses with their splayed plinths are of this time. (Notice however what may be the remains of an earlier string course below the present one in the east wall, and at the east end of the south wall, apparently cut flush with the wall surface.) Another feature of this period is the small doorway in the north wall, now leading into the sacristy, with its simple moulding running down to the floor.

Further modifications took place during the late 13th century when the four identical windows in the north and south walls were inserted, their pattern being of transitional Early English/Decorated design. Of slightly later date perhaps is the charming cinquefoiled piscine which is of unusual form, but the south door is probably contemporary with the tower as is also the western window of the south wall with its two cusped lights.

The east window is entirely Victorian, as is also the painted ceiling and the curious arrangement placing three oak figures on the roof beam nearest the tower. The carved figures themselves are old but were apparently placed here by the then vicar, Dr Bowles.

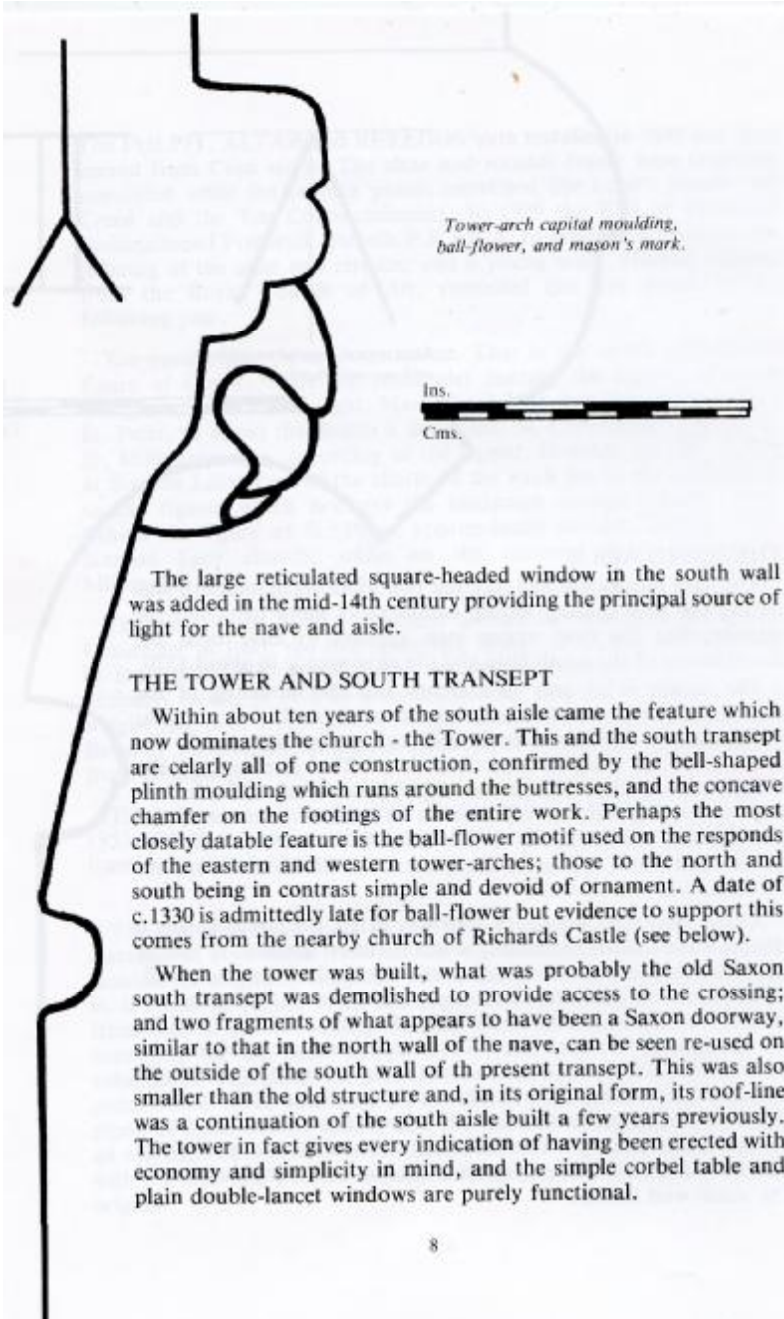


THE SOUTH AISLE

The nave meanwhile had received two windows in its north wall during the 13th century letting considerably more light into the interior, but the next major step appears to have been the construction of the south aisle and the nave arcade in about 1320.

The arcade is of only two arches and the moulding of the capitals of the pier and responds is identical, and is very similar to capitals in the Mortimer Chapel at Leintwardine and in the south aisle at Burghill near Hereford. The pier is typically octagonal in section. Notice the cusped heads to the chamfers on the western respond, not repeated on its eastern counterpart, and the masons' banker-marks in the form of a Roman II and an arrow-head which appear on many occasions on the under surface of the arches (see above).

At the same time the south door was fitted, the jambs having a double wave chamfer moulding which is almost identical to that of the two canopied tombs outside at the west end of the south wall. These tombs may therefore be directly connected with the construction of the south aisle but at the time of writing the identity of the occupants is not known. The slabs are now much eroded but in the 19th century that to the east was said to have been decorated with an elaborate floriated cross of which only the slightest trace now remains. The smaller western slab still bears the remnants of a simple scribed cross, and a portion of the dripstone of the canopy with its sunken chamfer is well preserved under the embracing buttress of the south-west corner.



Tower-arch capital moulding, ball-flower, and mason's mark.

Ins.
Cms.

The large reticulated square-headed window in the south wall was added in the mid-14th century providing the principal source of light for the nave and aisle.

THE TOWER AND SOUTH TRANSEPT

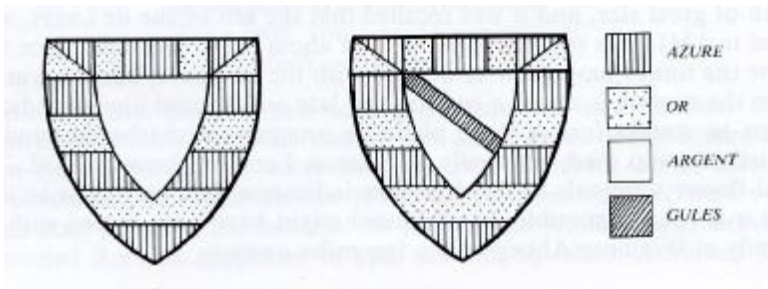
Within about ten years of the south aisle came the feature which now dominates the church - the Tower. This and the south transept are clearly all of one construction, confirmed by the bell-shaped plinth moulding which runs around the buttresses, and the concave chamfer on the footings of the entire work. Perhaps the most closely datable feature is the ball-flower motif used on the responds of the eastern and western tower-arches; those to the north and south being in contrast simple and devoid of ornament. A date of c.1330 is admittedly late for ball-flower but evidence to support this comes from the nearby church of Richards Castle (see below).

When the tower was built, what was probably the old Saxon south transept was demolished to provide access to the crossing; and two fragments of what appears to have been a Saxon doorway, similar to that in the north wall of the nave, can be seen re-used on the outside of the south wall of the present transept. This was also smaller than the old structure and, in its original form, its roof-line was a continuation of the south aisle built a few years previously. The tower in fact gives every indication of having been erected with economy and simplicity in mind, and the simple corbel table and plain double-lancet windows are purely functional.

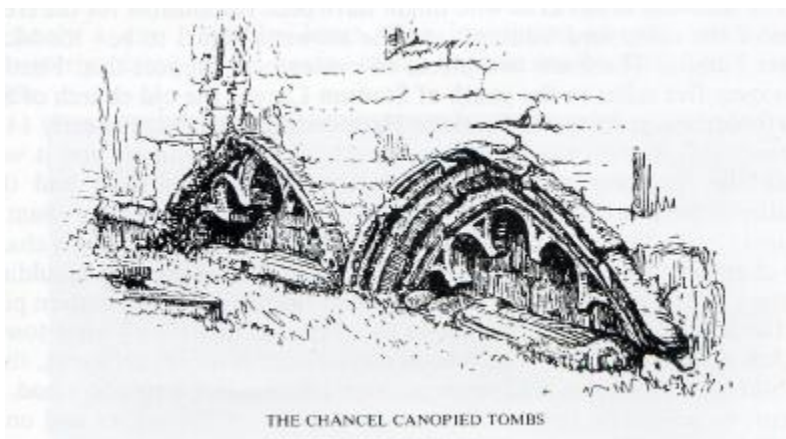
High up in the apex of the roof of the nave can be seen a doorway, with a Caernarvon head, which originally gave access into the roof space from what is now the bell-ringing chamber. A smaller rectangular opening can be seen under the rafters of the north transept, and there is another over the chancel but this is now obstructed by the roof. Also to be seen on the outside of the tower are the remains of the string courses of the former roofs which were at a much steeper pitch when the tower was built.

The question arises as to who might have been responsible for the erection of the tower and transept; and the answer appears to be - the Mortimer family. There are two pieces of evidence to support this. Firstly, just over five miles to the south of Stanton Lacy is the old church of St Bartholomew at Richards Castle in Herefordshire. During the early 14th century this manor was held by a branch of the Mortimers and it was Joan the daughter of Hugh de Mortimer who apparently had the southern nave arcade and south aisle constructed to make a chantry chapel to the Blessed Virgin; and the first recorded ordination of a chantry chaplain there is in June 1330. Not only is the bell-shaped moulding present on the buttresses, but the section of the capital of the eastern pier of the arcade is identical to that of the responds of the east/west tower arches at Stanton Lacy. The mason's marks are however different, that at Stanton Lacy being a Y shape, perhaps representing a mason's hod. It occurs at least nine times on the inner chamfer of the arches and on a capital (see opposite).

The second and virtually conclusive piece of evidence no longer exists but was recorded in a sketch drawn in 1795 by the Reverend Edward Williams in his survey of Shropshire church monuments. When he visited churches he also drew any heraldic stained glass and at Stanton Lacy he found two coats of arms in the east window of the south transept. That on the left was the coat of Roger de Mortimer, first Earl of March; while the coat on the right, recent research has revealed, was that of Roger's third son, Geoffrey de Mortimer, later of Couhé in Poitou. Their presence here is consistent with a date of c.1330.



Sadly these appear to have been destroyed in the mid-19th century, but they were almost certainly part of the original glass in the transept which formed a small chantry chapel. There are signs of former partitioning since mortices are cut into the south-west buttress of the tower and also above the responds of the southern tower arch. Notice also the contemporary piscine in the south wall used for washing the vessels after Mass at the altar here; also the aumbry and a small canopy which once may have held a burial.



This now brings us to the question of the two recessed tombs that are to be found on the exterior of the south wall of the chancel. Both are similar in style, with cusped canopies, and were inserted not many years apart in the middle of the 14th century. Both contain recumbent effigies of indeterminate sex since they are now greatly eroded and were probably deliberately defaced, and the western figure is broken through the neck. According to the story, in about 1850 an individual “who ought to have known better” decided that he wanted to be buried there, and when the effigy was moved it broke into two. Beneath the figure was a stone coffin which contained the skeleton of a man of great size, and it was recalled that the last of the de Lacys, who died in 1241, was reputed to have been about seven feet tall. Since that time the tombs have been associated with the de Lacys, but the truth is that the canopy is about a century too late and a more likely candidate must be sought. A more plausible occupant might be Edmund de Mortimer who died, reputedly at Stanton Lacy, in January 1332. The ball-flower terminals to the dripstone indicate a date very close to this, but it is equally possible that Edmund might have been buried with his family at Wigmore Abbey only a few miles away.



LATER ALTERATIONS

We know very little about the dates of subsequent changes, but it is known from a will that perhaps major repairs were in progress in 1480 when Piers Beaupie, Cofferer to Edward IV and a former member of parliament for Ludlow, left twenty shillings towards the work. This may have included the renewal of the roofs, for examination of the string courses on the outside of the tower makes it plain that over the nave, chancel and north transept they were much steeper than at present. The roof over the south aisle originally continued over the south transept but this was altered, probably in the latter half of the 16th century, when the transept was given a gable. This allowed a long rectangular window to be installed at former wall-plate level in the south wall to provide more light for the crossing. This was needed for, as was customary at this time, the altar would have been brought down here for communion. The window is shown in an excellent watercolour (see above) painted by the Reverend Williams in 1790, and was still there in the 1840s. It appears to have been removed to make way for the present Clive window.

RESTORATION: 1849/1850

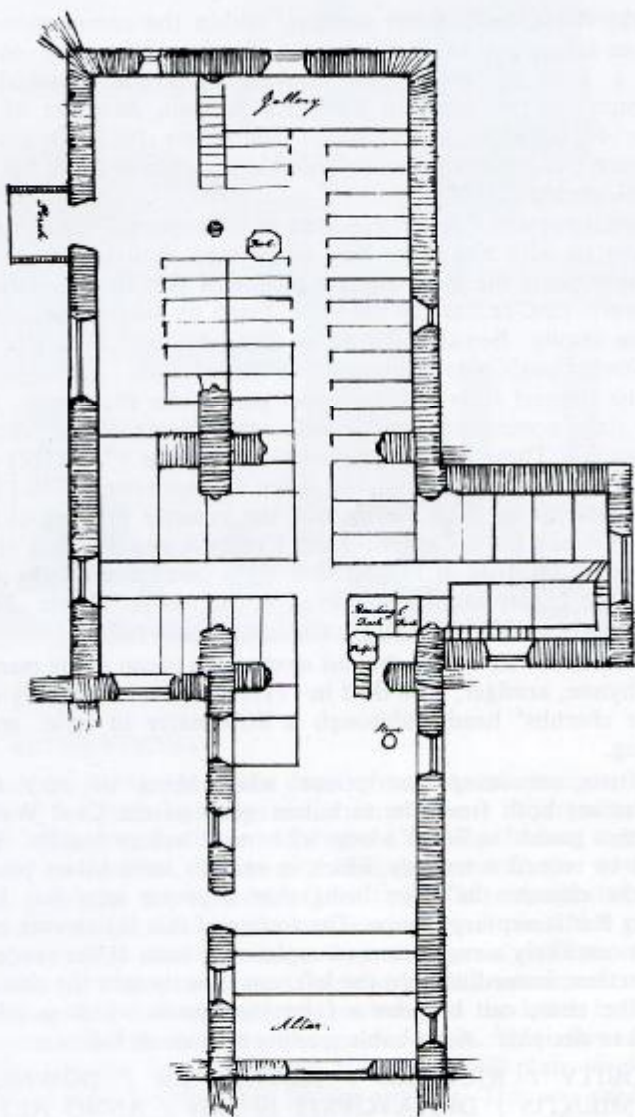
Dr Joseph Bowles, who was the principal mover behind the restoration, wrote to a friend in the 1860s: “When I became vicar in 1847, I found the church littered down with straw, covering the bare earth where the poor had seats. The vicar, Sir William Boughton, and some of the farmers had large high dormitories.” This charming allusion to the splendid roofed pews of the gentry, where their occupants perhaps occasionally slumbered through interminable sermons, is all that we have as a description of the interior before the old furnishings were swept away. An old ground plan, drawn by Archdeacon Vickers in the 1840s, also reveals that there was formerly a small western gallery at the back of the nave, almost all trace of which has now gone (see opposite).

The new work was supervised by Thomas Henry Wyatt, the London architect, and consisted principally of the building of a new vestry to the north of the chancel; the removal of the stairs to the belfry from inside the north transept to the exterior; the demolition of the western gallery; and the general replacement of the flooring, although most of the grave-slabs were preserved, if not in their original places. New fittings were supplied, particularly the pulpit, reredos and altar; and within the next few years came new heating, a new organ and the stained glass windows, all installed in the 1850s.

In 1889 the organ was moved, supposedly from under the tower, and the choir was placed in new stalls in the chancel. In 1903 the chancel was scraped of the old plaster, and in the following year the north transept received similar treatment, revealing the remains of the blocked-in Saxon door in the north wall, together with a small blocked single splay Norman window high up in the north-east corner. In 1904 the north wall of the nave was also scraped, this time revealing the north door on the interior and an ancient oak-lined aumbry not far from the tower arch. The old piece of carved oak above the latter is a recent addition.

THE MONUMENTS

None of the monuments inside the church is of exceptional quality but some are not without interest. The earliest lies half under the carpet at the top of the chancel steps behind the lectern, lying north/south, and is an early rectangular grave slab bearing a simple cross design. There is no inscription but it dates from about 1300. The top end has been neatly cut away at some time, presumably when it was used as a paving slab.



Archdeacon Vickers' church plan of c.1840. It is a priest's eye view, with the western gallery at the top. Note the position of the font, the box pews, the three-decker pulpit, and the internal belfry stairs in the north transept.

On the north wall of the chancel, within the communion rails, is what was formerly a table monument. The inscription, carved in stone below a coat of arms and flanked by crude classical pillars, commemorates the death of Elizabeth Scriven, daughter of William Swanne of Berwick, who died in September 1613. Originally this monument had a stone table, recorded in a sketch in 1795, but this was removed, perhaps in 1849.

On the opposite side of the altar is a memorial tablet to Samuel Newborough, who was vicar here from 1683 until his death in 1718; “for thirty years the most vigilant pastor of this church, esteemed by neighbours, kind-hearted to the poor, loved by his relatives, adored by his close family. Bewailed by all of these he died...” His brother, John Newborough, was headmaster at Eton.

On the chancel floor, for the most part under the carpet, are large marble slabs commemorating mostly other vicars of this church and their families. These include Samuel Greene (vicar 1718-1732) who was Samuel Newborough’s son-in-law; John Craven (vicar 1736-1752) who was also Rector of West Felton and the younger brother of the then patron William Lord Craven. John Craven’s son William eventually succeeded to the title in 1769. Other slabs commemorate two generations of the Lutley family, who lived in the Manor House. These last were formerly (1795) lying within the communion rails.

On the north wall of the chancel next to the organ is the memorial to John Thynne, armiger, who died in 1717. The coat is brightly coloured and the cherubs’ heads, although a little naïve in style, are rather charming.

The two remaining inscriptions, while being of very different character, are both from the turbulent years of the Civil War during which this parish suffered along with most others locally. The first appears to record a tragedy which is said to have taken place in or about the church, the story being that a young man was killed by pursuing Parliamentary troops. The source of this is however uncertain and is more likely a suggestion to explain the text. If the reader stands at the lectern, immediately to the left, cut directly into the chancel arch facing the altar can be seen a faint inscription which is admittedly difficult to decipher. A probable reading is given as follows:

IN OBITV / RICHARD / HEYNES DE / DOWNETON/ DORMIENTIS / DIE
AVGVSTI 19 1649 / ANNO AETATIS / SVAE 24 / FLORE VIGEN / TE
MEO IACEO / RICHARDVS / HVMATVS / / RAPTVS FLO / RE
VIGENTE / MEO / FLETE NEFAS / VESTRVM / CERTVS STAT /
TERMINVS / OMNI / ...ITE MOR / TIALES PVL / VIS ET VM / BRA
SVMVS / T.R.

The following translation is offered, although tentative in places since some portions of the inscription appear to have been obliterated:

IN OBIT OF RICHARD HEYNES OF DOWNTON WHO FELL ASLEEP
ON THE 19TH DAY OF AUGUST 1649 IN HIS 24TH YEAR. IN THE
FLOWER OF MY VIGOUR I RICHARD LIE BURIED SNATCHED
AWAY IN THE FLOWER OF MY VIGOUR. BEWAIL THIS WRONGFUL
DEED. CERTAIN STANDS THE LIMIT FOR YOU ALL. GO (?)
MORTALS WE ARE BUT DUST AND SHADOW. T.R.

The tone of the inscription certainly implies some tragedy and someone, possibly the vicar, felt moved to cut it into the church fabric, a most unusual event. This is an obscure period during the parish's history, since the registers were suspended at this time, but we do know that a Richard Heynes was baptized in this church in April 1626 and this is surely the young man in question.

The other inscription is on a brass plate fixed to the floor close to the foot of the pulpit steps. This was formerly on a stone on the right hand side of the altar and commemorates Thomas Atkinson who was vicar here from 1639 until his death in 1657. He appears to have been a staunch Royalist and was deprived of the rectory of Wistanstow, to which he had been presented in 1638, by the Parliamentary Committee; although he seems to have held both benefices for a few years. It was said however that he "met with such barbarous treatment, as was thought to shorten his days." The parish registers were not kept up during the period 1645 to 1650 "through distractions of the fearfull civil warre and the vicars enforced absence thereupon..." but they are however remarkable in having a number of comments entered in them in Latin which are almost certainly the work of Atkinson and reflect his views about contemporary events. For example:

*Pios multos est rem monstrosam
Scitote posterī, et erubescite
Much piety is a monstrous thing
Take note, you coming generations,
And blush with shame!*

Atkinson lost his first two sons as infants and also his first wife Anne in 1642. It is probable that he was in Ludlow shortly before the town fell to Parliament since one son that survived, John, later a physician, was baptized there in 1646. His fortunes however were very much determined by the fact that his patron was William Lord Craven, a devoted Royalist supporter in exile abroad, to whom Atkinson was also a chaplain, and on his return to Stanton Lacy,

apparently in the autumn of 1650, his property was confiscated by Parliament. (It is the same Lord Craven who appointed another son, Francis, to his father's old rectory at Wistanstow in 1678.)

It must have been an exhausted man who, in 1650, inscribed in the register:

Da pacem, Domine, lassati sumus
(Give us peace, O Lord, for we are wearied)

Clearly a cry from the heart. The inscription on the brass plate, formerly placed on his grave, seems to sum up the vicissitudes of his life.



It can be translated as follows:

Sacred unto Eternity

Under this stone await the resurrection of the dead
the precious remains of Thomas Atkinson until lately
the most worthy pastor of this church; whose heart was
the home of the brightest virtues side by side with knowledge,
whose tongue was the polished expounder of a keen judgement,
whose hand was the treasury of the poor, whose daily life was
likewise ordered under the strict rule of Harpocrates (silence).
At length his wearied spirit, as that of a ship much tossed to and fro
by the raging waves of the times, sped forth with the swelled sails
of faith into the haven of the blessed, the bosom of Abraham.

April the 8th A.D. 1657 in his 53rd year.

Elizabeth his beloved wife grieving placed (this brass here)
and consecrated it with her tears.

STAINED GLASS

Augustus Hare, writing in 1898, said two things about the glass at Stanton Lacy; firstly that it was revolting, and secondly that it was by O'Connor. While the first comment only reflects the changes in Victorian taste, the second is not true.

All the glass in the church dates from Dr Bowles' incumbency and much of it was put in at his own expense. It is almost exclusively by Evans of Shrewsbury and, while the colouring is perhaps a little startling, the overall effect is one of brilliance and richness. Notice the way in which the blue distances itself behind the other colours.

The East Window was inserted in 1858 and is in memory of Mary Bowles the vicar's mother. Divided into three panels, in the center is the figure of Christ as the Good Shepherd. Flanking it are the Virgin Mary to the left and St John to the right.

To the south of the altar is a window placed to the memory of the brother and sister of Sir Charles Rouse Boughton Bart. and dating from the 1850s.

The West window contains the figures of Saints Peter and Paul, but its main interest lies in the fact that the faces are taken from life. That on the left, as St Peter, is of Dr Joseph Bowles, vicar here from 1847 until his death in 1879. On the right as St Paul is his friend Dr William James Clement, an eminent physician and surgeon, who became Liberal MP for Shrewsbury from 1865 until his death in 1870.

At the east end of the south aisle are two windows which are very different in style. That on the south wall commemorates the Hon. Robert Henry Clive of Oakly Park, who was MP for South Shropshire for twenty-two years until his death in 1854. The central figure is a portrait.

The east window in the aisle is an old triple lancet which now contains the arms and initials of Dr Bowles, and similar glass is to be found in the former vicarage, which was substantially rebuilt early in his incumbency. It was this window which formerly contained the only known old glass in the church, described as two coats of arms of the Mortimer family and probably dating from the early 14th century (see p.9). They appear to have gone the way of much of the old heraldic glass in our churches during the 19th century, last being recorded here in 1795.

Both the chancel and the south aisle also contain windows made up from pieces but these are clearly fragments of Evans glass and are contemporary with the other work.

The PULPIT, ALTAR and REREDOS were installed in 1849 and were carved from Caen stone. The altar and reredos frame were originally unpainted while the reredos panels contained the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the Ten Commandments. In 1929 the Earl of Plymouth commissioned Frederick Etchells FRIBA to design a scheme for the painting of the altar and reredos; and a young artist, Hildred Harpin, from the Royal College of Art, repainted the five panels in the following year.

The panels bear closer examination. That in the center contains the figure of Christ, while the remainder contain the figures of saints which are, from left to right: Mary Magdalene with her ointment box; St Peter, to whom the church is dedicated; St Christopher; and finally St Milburgha who, according to the legend, founded the first church at Stanton Lacy. Part of the charm of the work lies in the background to the figures which portrays the landscape around Stanton Lacy. Behind the figure of St Peter, appropriately enough, can be found Stanton Lacy church; while on the extreme right, behind St Milburgha, is the town of Ludlow.

The peal of six BELLS is almost as cast by Abraham Rudhall of Gloucester in 1693, the five remaining being the earliest Rudhall bells in Shropshire. No.4 presumably became cracked and was replaced, probably recast, in 1778 by Thomas Rudhall at a cost of £20 4s. 0d. It weights just over seven hundredweight and was brought by road from Bewdley via Ludlow, probably after the river journey up the Severn from Gloucester.

The bells were rehung by John Taylor and Co. of Loughborough in 1953. Details of their weights and pitch can be found hanging in a frame near the south door.

The ORGAN was built by Messrs Gray and Davison and was installed in September 1854 mostly at the expense of the vicar Dr Bowles. As originally supplied, it was a Barrel and Finger Organ; that is, it could be played from the single manual and also automatically from one of three rotating barrels. These each provided ten tunes consisting for the most part of popular hymns with perhaps a few voluntaries. The barrel mechanism has since been removed, and a flat pedal board fitted sounding an additional rank of stopped diapason pipes. A small electric blower now provides the wind supply, although an old hand-operated lever has been retained. The pipework, together with the case and painted dummy display pipes, appears to be largely original.

The FONT is octagonal, each side of the bowl being divided into two panels carved with a repeated design of a shield and a rose. It is quite likely that originally these were painted, plausibly with the coat of arms of the Mortimers with a white rose. Admittedly, no trace of paint can now be seen but a likely date for the font is in the mid-14th Century. Before the restoration it was situated by the pier of the nave arcade, but it was then moved to the back of the nave before being placed in its present position.

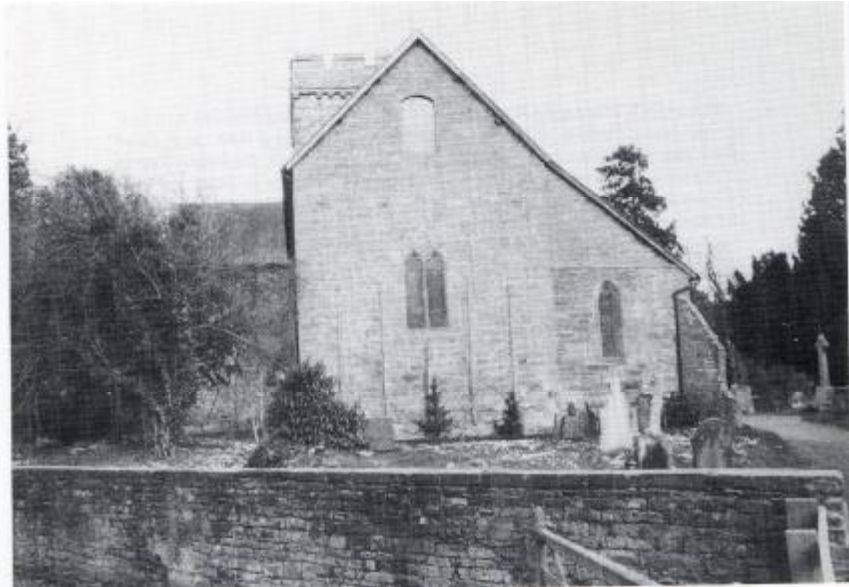
The present CLOCK was made by John Smith and Sons of Derby and was installed in October 1897; the hours are struck on the tenor bell. It replaced an ancient clock which was said to be “some 400 years old and completely worn out”. Another relic of former time-keeping is the remains of an old sun-dial which is to be found on the south wall of the south transept immediately above the buttress. The gnomon is now missing but the hour graduations are still plainly visible.

The ROYAL COAT OF ARMS, hanging in the nave above the tower-arch, bears the cipher of George II (1727-1760). This should have been updated to G III R in 1775 when the churchwardens’ accounts show that a coat of arms was painted at a cost of £1 11s 6d. It is therefore possible that this panel was brought here from some other church and is not that referred to.

The PARISH CHEST is placed in the south aisle and bears the abbreviated names of Thomas Watson and Richard Garbet, churchwardens in 1668. It is a fairly typical panelled chest of its period.

The CHURCH PLATE consists of a charming silver Chalice and Paten, both dated 1699. The chalice is of the late Commonwealth type, with a cylindrical bowl with an everted rim, a heavy stem with central ring knob and a stepped foot. It is stamped with the maker’s mark of John Cory of London and is inscribed STAUNTON – LACY 1699 TI RD, the latter being the initials of the churchwardens. The matching cover paten has a sunken center and reeding around the handle. Both are removed to a place of safety. There are also several old pieces of pewter.

The PORCH is mid-19th century and replaced an old timber-framed one of uncertain date.



The CHURCHYARD is today unusual in the immediate area in being almost untouched, and has thankfully kept much of its 18th/19th century atmosphere, while some of its neighbours are almost featureless. Up until about fifty years ago the south and west borders were planted with large elm trees, but these were felled when they became dangerous. In season the snowdrops have been a feature of note for many years, and are said to have been planted by Mrs Bowles.

At one time the churchyard boasted a charming inscription commemorating the death of one Thomas Davies of Langley in April 1760. It read:

*Good natur'd, generous, bold and free
He always was in company.
He loved his Bottle and his Friend
Which brought on soon his latter end.*

The stone that bore this inscription has now spalled but is placed against the south wall of the chancel, to the east of the priest's door.

The new churchyard, on the far side of the road to the east of the church, was opened in October 1923.

THE VICARS OF STANTON LACY

From 1103 until the Dissolution, the vicars were presented by the Prior and Convent of Llantony Prima. The two priests mentioned in the Domesday survey are represented, in later mediaeval times, by the vicar and a chaplain; and four of the early chaplains mentioned in records are included in the list below. The parish of Stanton Lacy was united in 1970 with those of Bromfield, Culmington and Onibury.

- 1277 Thomas de Stauntone Lacy, ordained Priest by Bishop Cantilupe. Probably a chaplain.
- 1301 Adam de Bromhale, subdeacon. Instituted October 1301
- 1340 Richard de Pembridge. Resigned in 1340.
- 1340 Griffin de Weston. Instituted in October 1340, still here in 1347.
- 1350 William de Cusynton. Resigned in 1350 and went to New Radnor.
- 1350 John de Geysborough. Instituted in June 1350.
- 1351 William Spark, chaplain, ordained Acolyte 1351, Priest 1352. Still here in 1360.
- 1385 Thomas Constable. Occurs 1385.
- 1397 Richard Frayn. Probably a chaplain, accused at a bishop's visitation.
- 1415 William Baker. Instituted January 1414, still here in 1420.
- 1420 John Fremon, 'chaplain of Stanton Lacy'
- 1456 William Baxtere. Resigned in 1456 and given pension. Possibly the same man as above.
- 1456 William Shery. Instituted 1456, died in 1464.
- 1464 William Mattes. Instituted April 1464, resigned February 1467.
- 1467 Philip Phillips. Instituted March 1467.
- 1468 John Baret. Resigned 1468.
- 1468 John Jordane. Instituted March 1468.
- 1480 Richard Housone. Resigned 1480.
- 1480 Richard Dodstone. Instituted September 1480.
- 1484 William Dewe. Resigned 1484
- 1484 Thomas Kenley. Instituted November 1484.
- 1535 John Brome. Here in 1535, and still so in 1554.

- 1560 Thomas Hopkins M.A. Instituted 1560, buried at Ludlow in November 1576. Rector of Ludlow, but formerly a Cistercian monk from Hailes in Gloucestershire.
- 1577 David Griffiths. Instituted 1577.
- 1587 John Whateley. Instituted in 1587, died in July 1634.
- 1634 Ralph Clayton, Doctor of Sacred Theology. Instituted September 1634, ejected 1639.
- 1639 Thomas Atkinson M.A. Instituted May 1639, died in April 1657. Rector of Wistanstow.
- 1660 Robert Foulkes. Inducted September 1660, executed in January 1679.
- 1679 Thomas Greenhalgh M.A. Instituted in July 1679, buried in January 1683.
- 1683 Samuel Newborough M.A. Instituted June 1683, died in June 1718.
- 1718 Samuel Greene M.A. Instituted September 1718, died in February 1732.
- 1733 William Wormington M.A. Instituted August 1733, resigned 1736.
- 1736 John Craven B.C.L. Instituted July 1736, died in August 1752.
- 1752 William Wormington M.A. Instituted September 1752, died 1755.
- 1755 William Sheppard. Inducted 1755, buried at Bitterley in 1766.
- 1776 William Stratton Liddiard. Inducted 1776, died in 1778.
- 1779 Richard Garrard A.B. Inducted 1779, died in 1786.
- 1787 James Watts A.B. Inducted November 1787, died December 1787.
- 1788 Joseph Pickering A.M. Inducted 1788, resigned 1806.
- 1807 Robert Henry Johnson A.M. Inducted 1807. Appointed Rector of Lutterworth in 1816.
- 1816 Henry Williams. Inducted 1816, resigned in 1820.
- 1820 George William St. John M.A. Inducted in 1820, later Rector of Bladon with Woodstock in exchange with Joseph Bowles.
- 1847 Joseph Bowles D.D. Inducted in 1847. Rector of Bladon with Woodstock 1841-1847. Died in 1879.
- 1879 Lewis Richard Charles Bagot M.A. Inducted in 1879, died in 1922.
- 1922 Robert Armitage D.S.O., M.A. Prebendary of Putson Minor.

1946	Aubrey George Durston L.Th.
1954	Hugh Henry Molesworth Bevan M.A. Archdeacon of Ludlow, Prebendary of Hampton.
1967	Leland John Blashford Snell M.B.E., T.D. Prebendary of Hereford.
1970	Stewart Pattison Carne-Ross.
1978	Gordon Elliott.
1983	Keith John McGregor Ewen.

Some of the men listed above have been embroiled in major historical events: such as John Brome, who in 1535 was caught up in the wind of change blowing through the English church following the schism with Rome. He was accused of:

Omitting to erase the Pope's name from the service books. The manual and the processional were unerased and uncorrected in every place, one old missal likewise, and another missal covered with small pieces of paper set on with barm where the name of the bishop of Rome called Pope was, and when the paper was taken away the said name appeared as fair as ever it was, and as legible.

Brome was presumably pardoned after his 'confession' was sent to London, for he was still here in 1554.

Thomas Atkinson, who was found on the wrong side during the Civil War (see p.15) emerges as something of a saintly martyr, unlike the men who immediately preceded and succeeded him. Ralph Clayton (inducted 1634) was an alcoholic black sheep who, in 1637, had been arraigned:

1. *For haunting alehouses, and once continuing in several alehouses in Ludlow from Thursday to Wednesday, neglecting to come to his church, being within two miles, or any other church on the Sunday.*
2. *For tempting the chastity of divers women.*
3. *For causing the bells to be rung at the bringing of beer into his house, making those who brought it drunk and giving the ringers 2s.*

He was soon afterwards thrown into the gaol in Ludlow Castle for "beating his sexton with a staff in the church" and finally ejected from the parish at the insistence of the patron Lord Craven. It was during Clayton's incumbency that the case of the rashly outspoken local recusant William Pickering was tried

An Alarme
FOR
SINNERS:

Containing

The Confession, Prayers, Letters, and
last Words of

Robert Foulkes,

Late Minister of *Stanton-Lacy* in the County of *Salop*;
who was Tryed, Convicted, and Sentenced, at the
Sessions in the *Old Bayly, London*, *January 16th 167⁹*,
and Executed the *31st* following.

With an Account of his LIFE.

Published from the Original, Written with his own hand, during
his Reprieve, and sent by him at his Death to
Doctor *Lloyd*, Dean of *Bangor*.

Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. 1 Cor. 10. 12.

Licensed, *Jan. 29. 1678.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Langley Curtis*, on *Ludgate-Hill*, 1679.

before the Star Chamber; apart from his religious views, Pickering was also said to have enclosed part of the churchyard and “made it into a hopyard or pigstie.”

Perhaps the most famous, if notorious, incumbent of Stanton Lacy is poor Robert Foulkes, who has the distinction of being one of the very few clergymen ever to have been executed for murder. After some eighteen years of respected service in the parish he had a scandalous affair with a young woman placed under his roof and, after murdering the resulting child, was hanged in London in January 1679. At least three contemporary tracts exist describing his last hours, including his famous confession entitled “An Alarme for Sinners”.

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