

History of St Michael and All Angels Church Colehill, Dorset



Cost £1.00

SOME OF ST MICHAEL'S FINER DETAILS

By John Spatchet

I was asked to write an article pointing out some of the precious details of our church. The collection I have chosen to bring to your attention is just some of the wealth of details that St. Michael's boasts. They are the gems that have caught my eye over the last thirty odd years of Choir Practices, Sermons, School Assemblies and Annual Parish Meetings. They are, of necessity a personal set of observations by one who has got no artistic, technical or historical expertise but who has come to love this little church and all its eccentricities and gems.

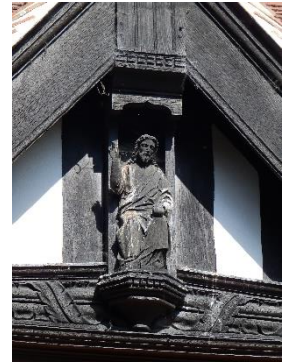
Please use this article to help focus your eye when you have an odd moment to look around you. I hope what information I have gleaned is accurate but in some cases I know little save that I find that feature pleasing or of interest. If you have greater or more accurate knowledge then please let us know or correct me as necessary.

Most people are drawn to our Church building by its unique combination of Arts and Crafts design with a seductive Scandinavian feel. It is, in itself, a very special building with a friendly, homely warmth about it. In the Wimborne area it could be argued that it is second only to the Minster in its architectural significance but this article deals not with the architecture but with its artefacts, some of which are equally noteworthy.



EXTERIOR

Christ in Glory: Look up at the exterior of the east end of the Church as you go through the gateway. Above the east window is a fine wooden carving of Christ in Glory. To my knowledge it was carved by the man who took the part of Christ in the Oberammergau Passion Play of 1900.



Weather Vane: While you are still looking up, take a look at the weather vane on top of the tower. Like most church vanes it shows no compass points. The church's east-west orientation does that for it. It comprises a gilded representation of Michael and the dragon with the wind direction indicated by two balls on horizontal bars.

The North Wall: My final exterior gem is the wall facing Smugglers' Lane. At first it is its striking form of half-timbered building that is noteworthy but it is its utilitarian aspect which is remarkable. It is said that the original aim was to have a North Aisle similar to the present South one. At the time of building there was insufficient population to warrant such a large church so the North wall was built as a temporary measure, which could be removed without compromising the building, when the population had grown large enough to need a larger church. We would then have had a symmetrical building but, what a temporary wall!



SANCTUARY

The Reredos: A fitting if romantic representation of the Nativity, this tripartite picture links the Matthew and Luke accounts of the Birth of Christ. Its use of muted colours makes it a subtle adornment of the Sanctuary.



Altar Frontal: The recently restored embroidered angels in the arched niches on the front of the altar are exquisitely detailed. Each one bears tools of Christ's Passion. The Sarum Guild of Embroiders who restored them were certain that the designs came out of William Morris's own workshop. They were stitched by four ladies of the parish in the early years of the 20th century.





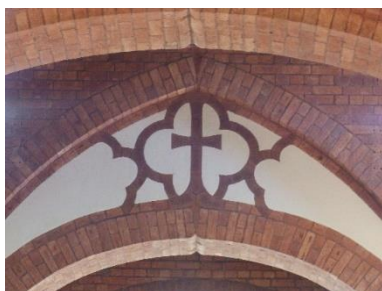
East Window: Now look up from the altar to see one of the most precious of all our possessions. St Michael's East Window was designed and made by one of the greatest turn of the century artists and ecclesiastical designers, Sir Ninian Comper. It depicts the four Archangels, Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and Uriel plus St George, our patron saint and St

Nicholas, alias Father Christmas. The finely worked window uses rich colours on a clear ground and is signed in Comper's inimitable way by depicting a wild strawberry plant in the bottom of each frame. To see more extensive Comper work, visit Wimborne St Giles Church.

The Sedilia: To the right of the altar, in the South wall of the Sanctuary is a simple yet attractively carved arched brick sedilia, a set of seats for priests and servers set into a Sanctuary wall. Each sedile has its own little leaded light, quite an unusual feature.



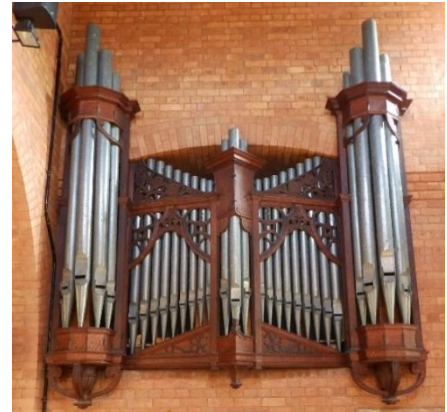
Cross and Candlesticks: On the shelf, below the reredos and behind the altar stand the cross and two candlesticks. This altar set is made from ebony inlaid with mother of pearl and merits a closer examination when you have a chance. Sadly some of the mother of pearl inlay has been lost but these are still fine workmanship.



Brick Cross: Finally look up at the brick archway above the Sanctuary and you will see in the white plasterwork a simple brick cross. It is the attention to such minute detail as that which sets St Michael's apart as being one of the most prized pieces of ecclesiastical architecture in the area.

CHANCEL

Organ Case: Although the original Conacher pipe organ is not of particular merit the oak casework above it is noteworthy with some very fine carving and fretwork setting off the quality spotted metal pipework on display within it. Sadly one of the central pipes has been dented which mars the display.



Processional Cross: Only on display during 9:30 services and at festivals, our processional cross is second only to the East Window in the significance of its craftsmanship. It is a fine example of the Edwardian silversmith's craft showing a traditional crucifixion adorned with simply cut semi-precious stones.

CROSSING

St. Michael Statue: Surely nobody who visits St. Michael's can fail to notice the beautiful oak statue of St. Michael set in an equally striking brick niche. The statue is by an artist called G. Pucci, presumably Italian, but about whom little is known. Was it commissioned for our church or gifted to us by a benefactor? The statue is essentially romantic in style but very sympathetic to both its subject and environment.

Lectern: In front of the statue stands our unique lectern depicting cherubs whose wings form the book rest. This is much more adventurous than the conventional brass eagle. The origins of it are not clear but it seems possible that it is older than most of our artefacts and indeed older than the base on which it is mounted. Its style is more baroque than the romantic images around it.





Battlefield Cross: Usually found below St. Michael's statue is this much more utilitarian memorial. This battlefield cross from the First World War is worth close examination and cross referencing with the memorial plaque on the north wall of the Chancel. This simple, poignant, temporary memorial is made out of packing cases, probably for shells or other ammunition. It gives us a direct insight into the terrible losses of that war. Lt. Lonsdale gives us a more tangible link with the entries on the war memorial at the end of the road.

NAVE

Heating System: This may be a strange thing to single out in this little survey of noteworthy features, particularly given our recent difficulties. Most churches of the period have radiators but ours has a fascinating additional feature to warm the central part of the church and set up a convection current in the building. There is a central channel down the middle of the central aisle floor with hot pipes and a grille above it. The efficient foresight of our forebears is was mostly covered by a carpet until 2018.

Spring Housing: The attention to detail in the design of St. Michael's is also shown in the trap doors at the west end of the nave. Our area of Colehill is littered with springs and the west end of our church is built over one of them. The engineers who designed it produced a remarkable housing for the spring 6 which prevents flood damage to the church's footings and redirects the water. It is still an interesting way to gauge the height of the water table on Colehill.

Baptistry Font: The font is perhaps the most quirky artefact in the church. Almost everything else in the building is made of local or potentially local materials. The font is marble, possibly Italian, and not in the same style as the rest of the church's artefacts. In its own right it is good workmanship and worthy of note. The cover is recent and was made by a member of the congregation, Stanley Goldsmith. Was this font originally destined for our church? Maybe not but it has welcomed many hundreds of Colehill children into God's family and, I pray that, along with our other little gems, it will continue to create a place of reverent proximity to the divine within our community for generations to come.



THE BUILDING OF ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS CHURCH COLEHILL

The events leading up to the building of our lovely church are well known to many of our congregation. They are also well worth repeating. It is a story that outlines the faith, dedication, determination and generosity of those who lived in Colehill 140 years ago.

Colonel Leopald Paget, Royal Artillery, came to live at Park Homer in 1865 At that time, Colehill was mostly heath-land, inhabited by what he described as “a rather wild and lawless population”. He soon discovered that a former resident, W Kingston, had occasionally gathered people together on Sundays in the Middlehill Schoolroom. Col.Paget sought the sanction of the local Clergy and the Bishop of Salisbury to continue these meetings, reading the Afternoon Service and a short printed sermon, and this was met with “hearty approval and encouragement”. The meetings were much appreciated.

During the summer of 1880, the incumbent of Wimborne Minster, Rev. F Trotman experimented by holding some open air evening services around Colehill, preaching from a wagon. Crowds of people attended these very popular meetings, and soon a petition was signed pleading with Rev. Trotman to get a Church built for them. In response to this plea, Col. Paget came forward, and thanks to an opportune legacy, arranged for an iron church to be erected with seating for 200 people. It was opened for service on the Feast of the Epiphany 1881. The attendance of worshippers was good and the number of Communicants large. It is said that the majority of the congregation were “belonging to the working classes” for whom there was no adequate accommodation in any neighbouring church. The Iron Church was later to become known as Trotman’s Tin Tabernacle.

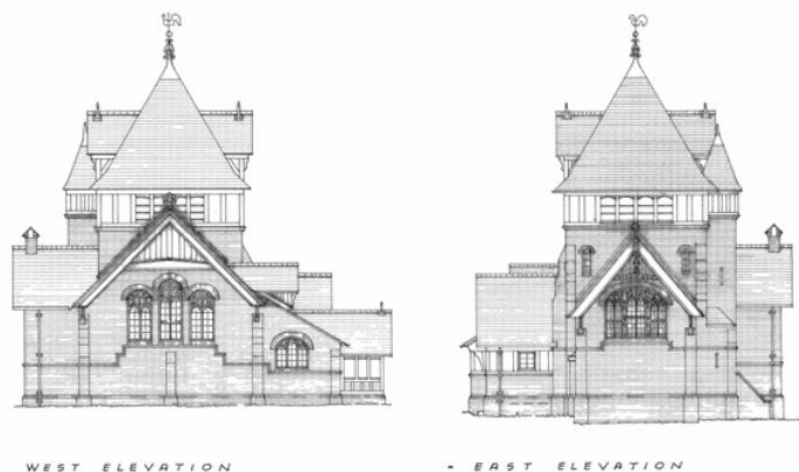
At the same time, Col. Paget started an Endowment Fund, which in ten years raised £2000, and this was considered sufficient to justify steps being taken to build a permanent church.



*Colonel Leopold Paget, of Park Homer House, from a sketch by Berry Dallas, 1892
(reproduced from Our Journal at Winterbourne St. Martins published by Dorset Natural
History & Archaeology Society)*

Walter Bankes Esq. of Kingston Lacy, owner of much of the surrounding land, kindly came forward with a grant of a piece of land quite near to the Tabernacle. on what was described as a very picturesque part of Colehill, covered with pine trees, and a prominent landmark in South Dorset commanding magnificent views.

It was time for the architect to be appointed, and Mr W D Caroe was selected. His distinctive design in "old English style and suitable to the surroundings" was submitted and enthusiastically approved of by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

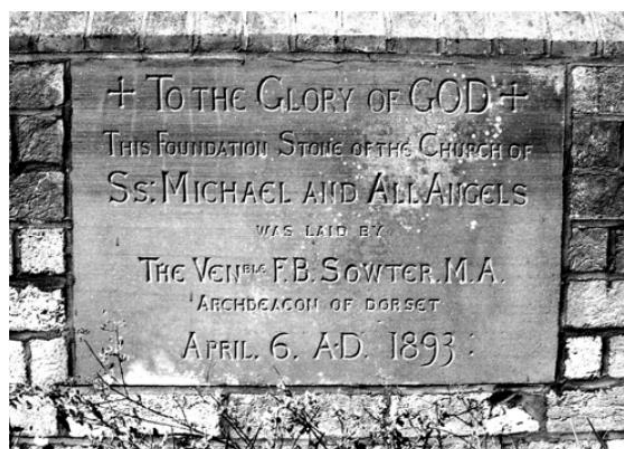


A Bazaar was held in the autumn of 1891, which raised £200 to start a Subscription dish. and during the winter of 1891/1892, subscriptions flowed in. Funds were increased by grants from the Incorporated Church Building Society and the Diocesan Church Holding Association. Because circumstances did not permit Col. Paget to finance the building of the whole church, he invited some friends to be associated with him as a Managing Committee, Trustees and Guarantors. The cost of building the Tower was offered by Major General R H Trewell a member of the Managing Committee and Trustees.

It now became a question of starting to build, but at this point, just as the hard work of the past ten years was about to be brought to fruition, Col. Paget was taken suddenly ill and died a few hours later. It remained for his family and friends to continue the work he had started, and it was agreed that St. Michael and all Angels Church should be some sort of a memorial to him.

On the festival of St. Michael and All Angels 29 September 1892 the ground was dedicated, and in the presence of a few friends Col. Paget's widow turned the first turf. Shortly after the ceremony tenders were sent out to nine contractors, and after due consideration Messrs Cormick & Gaynor of North Walsham, Norfolk were selected to carry out the work. Completion was promised by 1 December 1893. The total contract was for £2630 excluding Architect's fees and Conveyance of the land.

The Dedication of St Michael and All Angels took place on 11 December 1893, just ten days after the promised completion date. The final payment made to the Contractors was for £2544. 14s 3d.



On 17 June 1895 the church and churchyard was finally consecrated. This ceremony could not take place until all debts had been paid.

WILLIAM DOUGLAS CARÖE

Architect of St Michael and All Angels Church, Colehill

W. D. Caröe studied at Trinity College, Cambridge and was articled in Liverpool to the architectural practice of Edmund B. Kirby. His interest in buildings is shown in his sketchbooks which he began in 1876 and maintained all his life. As a young man he traveled widely in England and Europe, then further afield, sketching old buildings of all kinds. He was interested in the details of construction, mouldings, memorials and other features. He compiled a large number of photograph albums, showing a huge variety of churches and cathedrals. His interest in craftwork was shared with members of the Arts and Crafts movement. He was concerned with the preservation of buildings threatened with demolition and was associated with several campaigns to preserve buildings.

In 1881 he entered the London Office of the great church architect J.L. Pearson, where he became chief assistant while working on drawings for Truro Cathedral. The experience gained with Pearson led to Caröe's appointment in 1885 as an architect to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. He had to prepare reports on the plans and specifications for all new parish churches and a vast amount of church work passed through his hands. He was architect to several cathedrals, including Canterbury and Durham, restored countless ecclesiastical buildings as well as being the designer of many new churches, the most interesting of which are St David's, Exeter and St George's, Leicester. His own buildings showed the influence of the Art Workers' Guild (of which he was a member in 1890), and were his own personal version of a free Arts and Crafts Perpendicular.

His first commission for a new church was Gustaf Adolfs Kyrkan, Liverpool. This Swedish church dates from 1883-1884 and was built to serve the needs of seamen on the busy routes between Liverpool and Scandinavia and to offer a haven for Scandinavian immigrants who passed through the port of Liverpool on their way to America. The spire and dormers were finished in the manner of Norwegian stave churches.

St John's Church, Stanstead Mountfitchet, Essex was the first complete Anglican church designed by Caröe after he entered practice on his own. His lively involvement in the contemporary Arts and Crafts movement is indicated by the quality and individuality of craftsmanship employed.

The Church of St Michael and All Angels, Colehill, Dorset (1893- 1895) almost certainly takes its inspiration from the work of Edmund 11 Kirby and John Douglas, exponents of the revival of half timbering. Here black and white timbering appears in the gables, dormers, porch and tower, with contrasting red brick elsewhere. Inside, a huge elaborate timber roof, stained dark green crowns the nave and aisle, supported on square timber columns. Clear glazed windows provide alternating patches of bright light and shadow. The trim organ case is part of Caröe's scheme, as is the statue of St Michael in a niche between the aisle and the chancel. The vicarage and original church hall appear to be Caröe's work also.

The range of work which Caröe undertook was enormous, church restorations, extensions, alterations, additions, fitting and furnishing; projects for domestic, commercial, educational and other secular buildings; as well as plans for the conversion and adaptation of older buildings.

He designed in a variety of materials, in brick, timber and stone, and also metalwork, silverware, mosaic and marble work, sculpture and embroideries. He designed altar frontals and vestments for churches. They are generally richly formal with an abundance of heraldic emblems.

In Westminster Abbey the funeral pall, given by the Actors Guild in memory of actors who fell in the Great War, was designed by Caröe and first used at the funeral of the Unknown Warrior.

A few other churches of interest:

- St Matthew's Church Willesden
- London St Pauls Church
- Camberley Surrey. This church is a variant of the black and white church of St Michael and All Angels, Colehill, which preceded it by a decade.
- St Hugh's Church, Charterhouse, Mendip, Somerset.
- St Michael's Church, Chiswick
- London Barnard Castle School Chapel, Barnard Castle, Durham

Following the death of Carøe Alban, his son, with Aubyn Robinson carried on with the practice as “Carøe and Partners”. In the late 1960s his grandson Martin joined the practice.

1857 - 1938

Born and lived near Liverpool, son of Anders Kruse Carøe, Danish Consul in Liverpool. Married Grace Rendall in 1891 There were two sons and one daughter. Mrs Carøe was a talented lady, a good linguist and had a gift for entertaining and amateur theatricals.

On marriage they bought a house at 94 Cheyne Walk in Chelsea and later lived at Vann, Hambledon, Surrey.

Further Reading: W.D. Carøe RStO FSA: His architectural achievement. By Jennifer Freeman

Architects of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Margaret Richardson.



Drawing dated 1894



A little of the original picket fence can still be found under the hedgerow growth.

THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT

The architect of St Michaels and All Angels Church, Colehill, was a member of the Arts and Crafts movement. W. D. Caröe designed not only the church building but much of the interior furniture and fittings as well.

His work was influenced by the international movement of Arts and Crafts that flourished in Britain, Europe and America from the 1880s until the First World War, and in Japan from the 1920s until the Second World War. Arts and Crafts was developed initially in Britain where it had widespread influence. It was originally based on an idealistic set of principles for living and working which were taken up and adapted in many parts of the world to meet specific social and national needs, integrating heritage, local skills and resources. It changed the way we think about how things are made, revaluing skilled craftsmanship, and bringing about a new attitude which is still relevant today.

The movement took its name from the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, which was founded in London in 1887 and staged its first exhibition at the New Gallery in Regent Street the following year. Many other British and international groups adopted the term Arts and Crafts for their societies, studios and workshops. These groups established an idealised set of principles directed at the reform of art at every level and across a broad social spectrum – from ordinary worker to aristocratic patron, simple country cottage to city mansion. Their ideas and philosophies were adapted to meet specific social and national needs. The effect was profound and long lasting.

Arts and Crafts developed under the influence of two great men – the theorist and critic John Ruskin (1819-1900) and the designer, writer and activist William Morris (1834-1896). Ruskin's views on the relationship between art and labour and on freedom of individual expression were enormously important. Morris put Ruskin's philosophies into practice. The value he placed on work, practical skills and the joy of craftsmanship, and his appreciation of their natural beauty, led him to learn and revive earlier techniques and methods of manufacture.

Arts and Crafts was a protest movement. It galvanised artists, architects and tradesmen from the 1880s onwards. Arts and Crafts was against the ruthless commercial expansion, the cynical proliferation of the useless, the squalor and pollution carelessly created by industrial production, against monotony and

deadening of the human spirit. By the 1880s Morris was a commercially successful designer and manufacturer, whose call for a radical shift in manufacturing processes was taken up by the Arts and Crafts movement.



*Stained Glass Window M.H. Baillie Scott
(1865-1945) Britain 1902*

This was achieved through organisations such as the Art Workers Guild (established in 1884) and The Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, which gave the movement not only its name but also a public identity. The Arts and Crafts offered a conscious contrast to the humdrum predictability of factory made products. The new designer-makers satisfied a yearning for the individual and special with their perfectionism of technique: carving and gilding, tempera and marquetry, flambé and lustre glazing, appliquéing and burnishing, braiding, beading and smocking.

There was a fascination with texture, reflecting the unpredictable social mix within the workshops. Plain linen was embroidered with silks and gold thread; copper was combined with ebony and polished iron. The Arts and Crafts established new hierarchies of value in which precious metals and semiprecious stones could co-exist.

Arts and Crafts had its roots in a deep feeling for the countryside. Many practitioners settled in the country, recording the delights of rural vernacular building, investigating and reviving traditional crafts. There were connections with the back-to-land movement and the early 20th century English folk song revival. Much of the exhilaration of the Arts and Crafts sprang from its re-connections with particular localities. The Cotswolds, Haslemere, the Lake District and Cornwall were all centres of a movement that believed in the regenerative power of natural materials and motifs drawn from the countryside.

In 1902, the artist-craftsman C.R. Ashbee led the Guild of Handicraft out of the slums of London's East End, resettling 150 men, women and children in the then remote small town of Chipping Camden in the Cotswolds. The aim was the creation of beautiful things in beautiful surroundings. The cockney Londoners were inspired by ideas of repossession of their rightful rural homeland. This experiment lasted only five years, ending in economic crisis.

The movement flourished in the cities with important groups in Birmingham, Sheffield, Manchester, Glasgow and London. With its network of craft societies and selling exhibitions, London was the energising centre. The products of small workshops were on sale at craft oriented stores, such as Liberty's and Heal's.

It became a considerable movement: 130 separate Arts and Crafts organisations have been identified in Britain alone, the majority formed in the creatively radical decade between 1895 and 1905. Arts and Crafts overflowed into architecture, garden design and civic planning with the invention of the Garden City. In its demands not just for better working conditions but for more workers' control over the products of their labours, the Arts and Crafts and the beginnings of the British Labour movement are inextricably intertwined.

The movement also set its sights on influencing industrial design and manufacture, by interacting with the commercial world and raising standards in design through example. Indeed, it was not, as is popularly thought, implicit in the aims of the movement that machine production and commercial manufacture should be abandoned as the enemy of Arts and Crafts. Rather, if mechanical processes were to be used, then they should be applied appropriately. Several of the leading figures of the movement were successful commercial designers, forging new relationships with enlightened manufacturers and retailers, in particular Heals and Liberty's. In countries such as America and Germany engagement with industry and commercial production within the Arts and Crafts movement was embraced to positive effect.

In America the movement revolved around four principle players: Gustav Stickly on the East Coast, Frank Lloyd Wright in the Midwest and the architects Charles and Henry Greene in California. European responses to Arts and Crafts were varied with the revival of traditional techniques and subject matter in Finland, Norway and Russia, while in Germany there was a new engagement between art, craft and industry.

Common to all the countries in which the movement flourished was the enormous impact of Arts and Crafts on domestic lifestyles and design for the home across a very broad social spectrum. At Red House in Bexley, Kent, William Morris aimed to create a way of living that was community based. He introduced art into all aspects of everyday life, including functional domestic objects. The home became the focal point in which the new ideals could be explored. Designed interiors, model rooms and even whole buildings became important ways of presenting the concept that every home should be a work of art. Nothing in the domestic interior was too small or insignificant to be lovingly designed and made and all were intended to be seen and used together.

The architect M.H. Baillie Scott (1865-1945) wrote a book in 1906 entitled *Houses and Gardens, Arts and Crafts Interiors* in which each chapter deals with the design and decoration of separate rooms and parts of the house in great detail. He is also concerned with the family requirements including a chapter on Accommodation for family pets.

A great deal of Bournemouth was built during this period and many of the large properties built for wealthy families were influenced by Arts and Crafts. Sadly, a lot of them have been replaced by blocks of flats! The old vicarage in Colehill was designed by W.D. Caröe and is an example of Arts and Crafts domestic architecture.



The Old Vicarage, possibly in 1960

WHY IS OUR CHURCH CALLED ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS?

A simple question and easy to give a simple and straightforward answer. Traditionally churches on hills have always been dedicated to St. Michael and All Angels. Think of St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, or Mont-St.- Michel in Normandy France, as two good examples. Colehill is a church on a hill - hence when the church was built and a name discussed it is fairly easy to assume that St. Michael and All Angels was an obvious choice. But who is St. Michael? Why were churches on hills named after St. Michael and All Angels? Indeed where does the tradition for naming churches come from in the first place? Those question take us on a more interesting journey.



A church is named when it is dedicated i.e. when it is set apart to be used for worship and the glory of God. The tradition of naming or dedicating churches after a saint goes back to the early days of the Church. The very first recorded dedication of a Christian church is that of the Cathedral of Tyre in the year 314, and described by an early Church historian called Eusebius. Although that was nearly three hundred years after the death and resurrection of Christ it is not likely that any Christian Churches were built until then, since Christians were persecuted and their religion regarded as illegal throughout the Roman empire. It was only when the Roman Emperor Constantine was converted to Christianity in 312AD that Christianity became acceptable, and finally the official faith of the Roman state. So only then was it safe to build churches. Often they were built over the

site of martyrdom or burial of a local martyr – and so named after the person remembered there. Martyrs were always automatically known as saints. Hence the very first churches were as much as anything memorials to local heroes of the faith. Before long, it became the practice to place the bones or relics of a saint in a church if one was built where there was no local martyr. Right up to the present day, the altar of a Roman Catholic Church must be stone, and has a

small square cut out of the top, into which is placed a few relics of a martyr. Those who have been into churches on the continent may have seen glass cases somewhere in the vicinity of the main altar, containing bones of martyrs.

Many churches celebrate the feast day of the saint after whom their church is named as their Patronal Festival. 29th September is our Patronal Festival – the day when St. Michael is celebrated throughout the church - an ancient name for the day is Michaelmas. However, since few people turn out for a mid-week act of worship these days, we normally transfer a saint's day that falls in the middle of the week to the nearest Sunday. Since for us the nearest Sunday to 29th September is normally Harvest Festival Sunday, St. Michael does not get much of a look in. Which brings us to ask "Why is Colehill Church called after St. Michael and who was he?"

Michael is a Hebrew word meaning who is like God? He appears four times in scripture – twice in the Old Testament, twice in the New. In the OT he is mentioned in the Book of Daniel (10:13ff & 12:1) where he is represented in one of Daniel's visions as one of the great princes of Heaven and a helper of the chosen people. He appears again in the book of Jude (v9) where he is referred to as the archangel, disputing with the devil over the body of Moses, and finally in the Book of Revelation (12:7-9) where he leads the angels into battle with the devil. He appears much more often in some of the books that were rejected as biblical books – especially Jewish books written just before the time of Jesus when there was a great fascination with the idea of angels and all sorts of theories were being developed about them. It is these ideas that lie behind the biblical references to Michael. The allusion in the book of Jude, for example, is said by certain ancient authors to refer to a book called "The Assumption of Moses". However we have no complete copy of the original book – only a Latin translation of a partial text, which has no reference to the story in Jude. Michael is often associated with Gabriel and Raphael in some of these early accounts – both figures that appear in the stained glass window in the East end of our church.

Michael is always depicted fighting the devil in one guise or another – usually as a dragon, which is the way he is represented in our church. Michael quickly became identified in the early Church as the helper of Christian armies fighting against non-believers, and then as the protector of individual Christians in their

fight against the devil, particularly at the time of death, when he was supposed to conduct the soul to God. In the east he became associated with healing, and in Greece and Asia many hot springs were dedicated to him. The feast of St. Michael and All Angels 19 became fixed on 29th September in the 6th century when a great Church was dedicated to him on that date six miles north of Rome on the via Salaria.

And why were churches on hills particularly associated with him? There seem to be no early records to suggest why this should be. However hill tops were often associated with ritual places in ancient religions. Churches were frequently built on earlier pagan sites; inevitably this would put them on hill tops. If St. Michael was thought to represent the fight between good and evil (ie pagan religion and Christianity) then St. Michael would make a good patron saint. So, maybe, the tradition was born.

Rev. Canon John W Goodall

July 2005



Postcard, about 1905

THE CONSTRUCTION OF ST. MICHAEL'S

- **Who supplied the materials?**
- **Where were the bricks made?**
- **Was the timber from a local source?**
- **What do we know of the craftsmen who worked on the building?**

At the time of writing there does not appear to be any documentation regarding the actual construction of our church.

A local expert on the making of bricks Mr Gordon Richards, has kindly given us the following information.

'It is not easy to establish the source of all the bricks although at about that period most bricks were manufactured locally, mainly by farmers who dug the clay on their land, shaped it in moulds, then fired the bricks in kilns or earth clamps. It is said that some of today's national brickworks evolved from farmers' brickworks. Local history shows that there were a number of brickworks in Colehill. John Coombes and his son, and David Cobb, both of whose brickworks are in close proximity to the church. It is however recorded that some of the bricks used in the building of the church were supplied by John Coombes whose brickyard was almost next door to the church. Other bricks were brought in by train to Wimborne Station, and hauled up the hill to the site There is no indication as to which bricks were used where but my theory is that it is possible that the local bricks were used in the external walls.'



With regard to the timber, it seems likely that most of the timber was imported from Scandinavia, and we have heard that it was supplied by Sydenham's, timber merchants in Poole, and hauled by horse drawn timber drag to Colehill via Gravel Hill. Mr Richards suggests that the timber beams set in the external rendered panels are oak, as probably are the main roof timbers, and the roof tiles are 21 clay and could be from a reasonably local source as there were a number of tile manufacturers in the area.

The Building Contractor probably brought some of his own craftsmen from Norfolk, but would have employed local tradesmen as well.

Magazine THE BUILDER MARCH 14 1903.



Photograph caption CHURCH OF ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS, COLEHILL

This small but picturesque church was built near Wimborne, from the designs of Mr. W. D. Caröe. The construction, as will be seen, is of a simple and picturesque character. The base of the nave is of brick with timber construction above, the nave arcade being also of timber, as in the case of some of our smaller ancient country churches.



An early photograph of the church. The notice is appealing for funds. "Subscriptions to the Building Fund are earnestly requested. £290 needed to clear the debt."

THE RE-ORDERING PROJECT

In 2016, the the PCC met for a Vision Day, trying to understand what God's vision was for St Michael's for the future. We started with a clean sheet and open minds and came up with a whole set of ideas and plans. Members of the PCC at the time spoke of the need to look at more flexible arrangement of the space, to resolve the issue of the organ, to make provision for a nave altar and to consider in due course the eventual replacement of the existing chairs to achieve greater comfort and flexibility. We began by meeting informally with the Archdeacon and with members of the DAC and got ideas from them. We were granted an Archdeacon's licence for a 15-month experimental period from September 2016 - December 2017 to try out different layouts and to discover what could be achieved with a much more flexible space and moveable seating, and during this period held two open meetings to provide opportunity for feedback.

We now have a nave altar which reflects the overall style of the original arts and crafts design of the Church, we have built a temporary dais to raise the altar so that it is more visible to all; we have settled on an arrangement of the chairs for the regular services that allows the congregation to engage with the Eucharist, and importantly for the president to engage directly with the congregation. It has been good to experiment with different layouts at different times of the year, which has enriched our experience of worship. We have also found that those who come to church for weddings, baptisms or funerals have commented very positively on the layout. Many have spoken of a feeling of being both welcomed and 'embraced' by the new layout.



Last October we obtained a faculty for the replacement of the Allen organ, a replacement that was much encouraged by the DAC to provide a more open space at the front of the Church. Its removal from the front of the church has revealed the pulpit for the first time in about 30 odd years. Now that this has been achieved and we have more or less settled on an East-facing in the round layout for most services we can reinstate the use of the lectern to achieve that lovely symmetry between pulpit and lectern. We now have a much smaller organ but one which can be played from three locations and importantly is moveable. We have only had it for a couple of weeks and there are tweaks that we will need to make but it has already found favour with our organists.



In January 2018, we received a faculty approving the permanent arrangement of a nave altar and the removal of the battens from the chairs to maintain the flexible seating arrangement. We have also removed the carpet from the nave and the area at the back of church, and we have had the floor re-polished. This has removed an artificial barrier and allowed more flexibility in the placing of chairs.

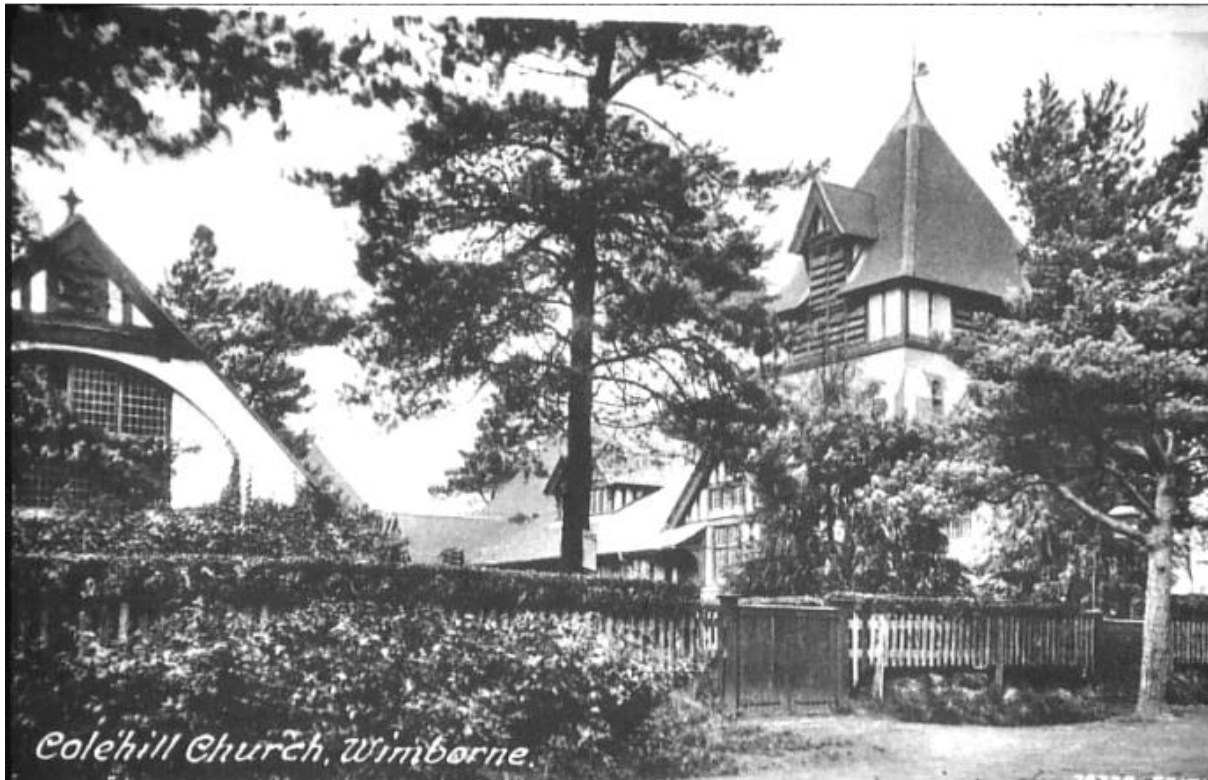
The object of the reordering process has been to try to envisage what might be needed for liturgy and worship and for a wider range of activities for the next 20-25 years and to work with God in achieving that vision. We have met with the architect on several occasions and a few weeks ago five members of the reordering group went to his office and talked through more changes, relying on his experience for guiding us as to what would be appropriate and acceptable to the DAC, showing how the design should fit together.

We still have much to do. The plan we have at the moment or a variant thereof has to be costed and agreed, we will need to apply for additional faculty or faculties and we have to find the funding, but hopefully if everyone sees what we are trying to achieve we will all get there.

The Vicar, and Churchwardens,
APCM 22 April 2018

CAN YOU HELP

Do you have any information that might help us to assemble some documentation of the intervening months whilst building was in progress? Maybe an anecdotal tale which has been handed down from Grandparents who worked or helped on the building or helped to transport some of the materials? ***We would be pleased to hear from you!***



Postcard showing the old Church Hall



Photograph taken soon after the new Church Centre was finished 2001

Extra notes from Gordon Richards about the bricks.

The main part of both the external and internal walls was built in clay facing bricks and there has been an excellent use of special shaped bricks in the arches, window surrounds, buttress walls and in the feature plinth bricks used both internally and externally. Very good used of fair faced brickwork internally, to make an attractive, warm and welcoming atmosphere. Timber beams set in external rendered panels would, I suggest be oak, as probably are the main roof timbers. Roof tiles are clay and may be from a reasonably local source as there were a number of tile manufacturers in the area The Church is an excellent example of the use of brickwork, and special shapes which to my eye is very aesthetically pleasing.

<http://www.stmichaels-church-colehill.co.uk/>

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2018