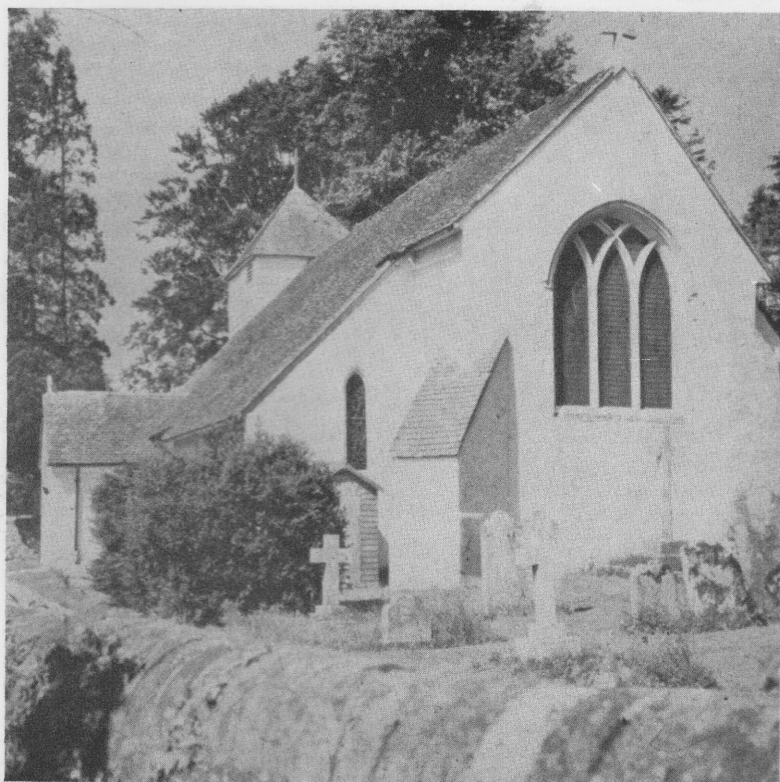


A SHORT ACCOUNT OF  
ALL SAINTS CHURCH  
BIGHTON  
HAMPSHIRE

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In aid of the Church Restoration Fund

## RECENT IMPROVEMENTS

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In 1964 when the exterior walls of the Church were replastered, the stripping of the plaster disclosed a small, lancet windowframe, possibly Saxon, in the South chancel wall close to the East end. The window had been blocked by stone blocks, and any record or sign of it had completely disappeared, both inside and out. It was decided that when the interior of the Church was redecorated the window should be opened up. This was done in 1968 when it was found that the interior arch and part of the wall above it had collapsed, so the wall has been shored up with timber, the window blocked, and the whole plastered over. The restoration work was done by Messrs Vokes and Beck of Winchester in 1969. They repaired the wall and made a new arch exactly to match that on the north side of the chancel. The window was glazed with diamond panes by Messrs Morton of Winchester. The date of the collapse is not known, but a small memorial brass, dated 1857, had been fixed to the wall projecting above the bottom of the embrasure, so the alteration must have been done previous to that date. The brass has now been fixed at a lower level.

When the Church was redecorated internally in 1969, a completely new, indirect lighting system was installed by Mr. and Mrs. McCowen of Bighton Manor in memory of their son Michael who was drowned at sea in 1964. This has greatly added to the beauty of the Church.

**B**IGHTON has little or no history, and in this is fortunate. It is referred to as:—

Bykingtune and Bicincgtun in the 10th century.

Bighetone	„	11th	„
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Byketon	„	13th	„
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Biketon	„	14th	„
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Bicketon	„	16th	„
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The earliest reference to Bighton is when a grant of land, including the greater part of the Manor and Parish, was made by King Ine to Winchester Cathedral in 701. In 959 King Edwy granted the Manor of Bighton to the Abbot of Hyde, and it was held by the Abbey or their tenants until the Dissolution.

The Church at Bighton, which is dedicated to All Saints, is a very ancient structure, and although perhaps not beautiful externally according to Church architectural standards, it nevertheless possesses great charm and contains some interesting features.

The first record of a Church in Bighton is in the Domesday Book, but it is quite certain that there was a Church here very many years before the Norman Conquest. In those days the fabric most likely consisted of wattle, daub and thatch, as most churches did, except those associated with the centre of a Diocese or other important ecclesiastical centre.

The Church as it exists to-day has been so patched, repaired and altered during the centuries that no trace of the original structure is visible, and the oldest part of the present building dates from the late Norman period, *i.e.* 1180 to 1190, when it was probably rebuilt.

The exterior is composed of flint covered with plaster, and a red-tiled roof, which is carried over the Nave and Aisles without a break.

The Nave, with the Chancel, is 48 feet long by 18 feet wide. The Chancel is 21 feet in length. There are North and South Chapels and Aisles, North-East Vestry, South Porch and Tower. The Nave is divided from the Aisles by two principal arches, pointed and supported on each side by a round pillar after the Norman style. The Capital on the North side has scrolled foliage, that on the South is scalloped. The bases are moulded with angle spurs.





*(By courtesy of Brian Champion)*



At the East end of the North Aisle there was once a chapel. Evidence of this is a stall or tabernacle which appears to be Norman, and dates from about the 13th century. There was also a chapel at the end of the South Aisle, and, on the wall, may be seen two brackets which may have supported images.

Near the South-East angle of the Church is a trefoil piscina with a bowl. This dates from about 1300. Close by is a squint from the South Chapel. These squints are often erroneously referred to as "leper's squints." Actually they were cut in a wall of a church to enable persons standing in the side chapels, etc., to see the Elevation of the Host at the High Altar. On the West side of the South Arcade is what may have been a pillar piscina with leaf work on the bowl; this dates from about 1190.

**WINDOWS.**—The East window is modern except the rear arch and jambs, which date from 1300.

The aisles and ground stages of the Tower are supplied with lancet windows fitted with plain glass, with the exception of two Memorial Windows. There is a Memorial Window at the East end of the South Chapel.

The East window in the North Chapel is interesting. It has two trefoil lights and dates from about 1300. This is now blocked by the Vestry.

The oldest feature of the Church is probably the North window of the Chancel. It is a narrow, round-headed light tapering outwards, and is now hidden from the outside by the Vestry roof. The thickness of the wall in which the window is set is 2 feet 10 inches. The date may be early in the twelfth century or even a remnant of an earlier building. In 1964, when the exterior of the Church was being renovated, a small blocked-up window-frame of irregular stones was discovered at the East end of the South wall, when the old plaster was stripped. This is probably of Saxon date.

**FONT.**—The Font, which is carved out of a solid block of Purbeck marble, is of the type often considered to be of Saxon workmanship, but most probably dates from the thirteenth century, as it is most unlikely that Purbeck marble was used for this purpose prior to this period. The square bowl is set on a central shaft. Four small angle shafts have disappeared, but their bases remain.

**TOWER.**—The tower is of masonry in the lower stage only. The upper stages are timber, some of the beams being

very old. A huge beam carries the whole weight of the tower at each corner, but parts had to be replaced when the Church was restored in 1950. At that time, the slate roof of the tower was replaced by tiles to match the main roof. The only access to the tower is from the outside, by ladder to a small door on the north side, a vaulted ceiling having been built in the tower by the Christian family, when they enclosed the West end of the church as a family pew.

There are pits for three bells in the Tower, but only one old bell now remains. This is of early sixteenth century make and bears the stamp and lettering of Roger Landon—a lion's head, groat and cross. The inscription on the bell reads "Sancta Ann Oar". This is a crude way of inscribing "Sancta Anna Ora Pro Nobis."

**PLATE.**—The Church plate consists of a large silver paten of 1696 and a communion cup, paten and flagon of 1757. A full description of the plate is given in *Church Plate of Hampshire*.

**ADVOWSON.**—The Advowson has followed the descent of the Manor since the time of the Domesday Survey. The last lay patron was Captain K. E. Nicoll. After his death in 1954, his widow gave the patronage of the living to the Bishop of Winchester.

**CHARITIES.**—In September, 1725, in response to Bishop Willis's visitation (the original document is preserved in Winchester Cathedral Library, and gives the population of Bighton as 150 souls), William Phillips, Curate of Bighton states: "A charity of £50 called by the name of Batchelours Money, at present in the hand of Sir Robert Worsley, who is pleased to allow at the rate of 6 per cent. for it and the interest being paid every half year is distributed among the poor, according to the discretion of the Ministers and Overseers. Here is also a gift of three acres and three-quarters, or thereabouts, let for 15s. a year (bequeathed by whom unknown) for ye repairs of the Church and layed out accordingly."

When in 1772, James, Duke of Chandos, acquired the greater part of the Manor by purchase, he gave a bond to the Rector and Parish Officers for £50 with interest at 5 per cent. This was said to include the sum of £15 set aside to produce 15s. a year derived from the gift of John Pink in 1642. The fund was known as "Poor's Money". In 1862 it was vested in the Charity Commission, from which it produced



an income of 11s. 7d. quarterly, which was distributed annually to the old people and poor of the parish, usually in the form of coal.

In 1966, under a further scheme of the Charity Commission, this Charity was merged with 26 other Charities in the district as the Winchester Rural District Welfare Trust, under the administration of Trustees, of whom one is appointed by the Parish Meeting of Bighton.

**MEMORIALS.**—The Church has a painted and gilded Chancel Screen, with a beam above, and the roofs of the Nave and Aisles are panelled and coloured. The work was designed by Sir Ninian Comper, the well-known church architect, and carried out under his supervision in 1904 as memorials to members of the Christian family, then resident at Bighton House. The panelling, altar table and marble sanctuary floor were given by the Hanning Lee family of Bighton Manor.

In addition to the Memorial Screen and roof panelling and the panelling and furniture in the Chancel already referred to, there are various memorials which should be mentioned. There is a memorial tablet to the two only sons of the Rev. J. T. Maine who died whilst serving with H.M. 39th and 77th Regiments in 1864 and 1854 respectively. Another to the son of the Rev. George Deane who fell at Sebastopol in 1855 while serving with H.M. 30th Regiment, and still another to the second son of the Rev. George Deane who was killed at Laing's Nek in 1881.

There is also a memorial tablet to the Rev. J. Hopkins, M.A., Rector of Bighton, who left £50 to repair the Church and died in 1708. Another to the Rev. John Harrison, Rector of Bighton from 1770 to 1811. Another to the memory of Michael Norgate who lived the whole of his 72 years in Bighton and died in 1915.

There are two Memorial Windows. One in memory of George Christian who died in 1903, and the other to his wife who died in 1917.

The beautiful Stained-glass Window in the South Chapel depicting St. Joan was dedicated in 1926 to the memory of Patricia Ruth Leonard, daughter of the Rev. J. G. Leonard.

The Memorial to those who served in H.M. Forces during the Great War contains 47 names, of which number three died. This is a proud record for a village of about 200 inhabitants.



This Memorial was carved by a Miss Sandford, whose family, at that time, was renting the Rectory. Only one parishioner was killed in the second World War, and his name was added to the existing memorial. In 1950 the Churchyard gate was given in memory of the Rev. J. A. Hill, who had taken many services during vacancies and who is buried in the Churchyard. In 1956 Altar Rails were provided for the Chapel in the South Aisle, in memory of Captain K. E. Nicoll. These were carved by Mr. Eric Sharpe of Itchen Abbas.

In 1960, a new Pulpit, designed by Mr. Sebastian Comper, son of Sir Ninian Comper, was dedicated in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Barton. Mr. Barton was Churchwarden for many years, and, as Lay Reader, took many services in the Church.

In 1950, during the laying of a new wood block floor in the South Aisle, a private burial vault was discovered at the East end, which is believed, from evidence in the Burial Register, to belong to the family of the Rev. John Harrison, Rector 1770-1811, and whose memorial, in the Chancel has already been mentioned. The entry in the old Burial Register reads:

“ Harrison William	(My ever-honoured, worthy and respected father) was buried in this Church November the 20th. aged 68. ‘When such friends part ’Tis the Survivor dies. My heart! No more.’	1775
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N.B.—The vault built for his family lies under the Chapel Pew, the South side of the Chancel.

John Harrison Rector.”

**ROYAL COAT OF ARMS.**—There is a Royal Coat of Arms in the Church painted on canvas and framed, dating most probably from the time of Charles II. James I ordered the Coat of Arms to be displayed in all churches. These had always appeared in churches in glass, carving, or on vestments; but their appearance painted on canvas and framed had probably a special significance after the Reformation as denoting that the King was the temporal head of the Church of England. They were frequently hung on the chancel screen. Upon the establishment of the Commonwealth, the Royal Arms were ordered to be taken down and those of the Commonwealth displayed in their place. At the Restoration the Royal Arms were again displayed.

It is interesting to note that the Fleurs de Lys of France are quartered on the Coat of Arms. This was originated by

Edward III, who claimed the throne of France through his mother, Isabella of France, daughter of Philip IV. The practice was continued by all Sovereigns of England until George III decided to drop it in 1801. The Royal motto, "Dieu et mon Droit," was first used by Edward III and was probably inspired by his claim to the French throne.

**REGISTERS.**—The first book of the Registers contains Baptisms and Burials from 1573 to 1805, and Marriages from 1573 to 1754. The second book gives Baptisms and Burials from 1805 to 1812, and the third book Marriages from 1754 to 1812.

The following is copied from the Registers:—

"MEMORANDA that on an order issued out in the County of Southampton at the Quarter Sessions held at the Castle of Winton October 8th in the thirtieth year of the reign of King Charles II, our gracious Sovereign 1678, and it was there ordered, no householder, whatsoever, might permit or suffer any rogue or wandering person to lodge or abide within their house or barn or outhouse under penalties of 10s. Art. 12."

This was published in Bighton Church, January 30th, 1678. This order was on account of the prevalence of small-pox in the country.

An entry in the Register 100 years later and a note by the Rector is given below:—

"Mary Cannings was buried in woollen only Dec. 31st, 1779.

"John Cannings, husband of Mary Cannings, was buried in woollen only 1st January 1780."

"N.B.—Both the old man and his wife died of the small-pox caught from a travelling man lodged in a stable joining their cottage. The same man, likewise wantonly infected two other families in the Parish. A caution this in future from lodging vagrants contrary to Act of Parliament."

There are numerous references to death by small-pox in the days previous to vaccination.

It will be noticed in the Burials referred to it is stated that the deceased were buried in woollen only. This was in accordance with an Act of Parliament which was introduced to help the wool trade, then the chief industry in England.





The Act (30 Car. II, Cap. 3) became law in Charles II's reign and is described as

“an act for the lessening of the importation of linen from  
“beyond the seas and the encouragement of the woollen  
“and paper manufacturers of the Kingdom.”

The Act also states:

“no corpse shall be buried in anything other than what  
“is made of sheep's wool only, or to be put into any  
“coffin lined or faced with anything made of material  
“but sheep's wool on pain of £5.”

“Persons in Holy Orders or their substitutes shall  
“keep a Register of all persons buried in their precincts,  
“or in such common burial places as their parishioners  
“are commonly buried.”

An affidavit signed by two witnesses had to be sworn before a clergyman or Justice of the Peace that the corpse had been so buried. The Act was repealed in George III's reign (54 Geo. III, Cap. 108), but had evidently fallen into disuse before this. The first mention of burial in woollen only is in 1678 and the last one in 1784.

A tragedy is recorded with a note by the Rector:—

“Edward Weekes, buried Nov. 5th 1743. N.B.—His  
“skull was fractured in a well by ye bucket falling in upon  
“him and he died in ye hospital at Winchester.”

In 1630 a reference is made to the maintenance of the Churchyard rails. Certain individual parishioners were allotted two pairs of rails each to maintain. Woodlark Farm maintained the Churchyard gates and the Parsonage the walls on the South side. In 1756 there is a further reference to the maintenance of the rails of the Churchyard and the names of those responsible.

Names still well known in the neighbourhood appear very early in the Register. Those of Hasted, Ruffell, Crockford and Cannings are amongst those most frequently in evidence from the commencement of the Register.

### RECTORS OF BIGHTON

1285. May 24th. Ralph, Rector of Biketone, witnessed a document.  
1294. Sept. 22nd. Andrew of Stannford was instituted to the Rectory.

1536. John Reade died 1552. N.B.—He was returned as Rector at the time of the Valor Ecclesiasticus in 1536. This was a valuation of all Church property ordered by Henry VIII. The amount returned was £19. 8s. 1½d.
1552. John Power (or Poore). Patron of the living. Died 1556.
1556. Robert Brett.
1580. John Mason.
1624. Hugh Robinson, D.D.
1643. Thos. Burgess was Minister. N.B.—He married Dr. Robinson's daughter and was some time Curate in 1653. He stands taxed by name for the Rectory and in 1662 he subscribes himself 'Rector.' He was buried at Bighton January 3rd, 1664.
1665. Richard Page.
1688. John Hopkins. N.B.—He left £50 for repairing the Church, and was buried at Bighton, October 30th, 1708.
1709. Mr. Mitchell.
1732. William Sealy. N.B.—He rebuilt the Parsonage House, Brew House, Coach House, Barns and Stabling and was buried at Bighton February 4th, 1767.
1767. Philip Eyre, M.A. N.B.—He was both Rector and Lord of the Manor.
1770. John Harrison.
1811. William Henry Barnard.
1814. Thomas Bromley.
1827. George Deane.
1872. Alfred William Cooke, LL.B. N.B.—Curate, 1871-2.
1920. John Grainge Leonard, M.A.
1932. Robert Hartley, M.A.
1935. Edward Rouviere Day, M.A., C.M.G., C.B.E.
1938. Canon Robertson (held in plurality with New Alresford).
1942. Edward Nicholl (held in plurality with New Alresford).
1949. Wm. A. MacFarlane (held in plurality with Bishops Sutton).
1953. Canon Banks (held in plurality with Bishops Sutton).
1958. Mervyn H. Griffiths (held in plurality with Bishops Sutton).