

**YCCART 2022/Y7**

**St Lawrence Church, Wick St Lawrence**

**Inside the Church**

**YATTON, CONGRESBURY, CLAVERHAM AND CLEEVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
RESEARCH TEAM (YCCART)**

*General Editor: Vince Russett*



## **Introduction**

Covid restricted previous action to a report on the outside of the church  
*YCCCART 2020/Y9, St Lawrence Church, Wick St Lawrence, Outside the Church*  
This is on our website <http://www.ycccart.co.uk>.

This report covers the inside of the church.

## **YCCCART**

Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team (YCCCART) is one of a number of community archaeology teams across northern Somerset, formerly supported by the North Somerset Council Development Management Team. Our objective is to undertake archaeological fieldwork to enable a better understanding and management of the heritage of the area while recording and publishing the activities and locations of the research carried out. For more information please visit <http://www.ycccart.co.uk/>

## **Acknowledgements**

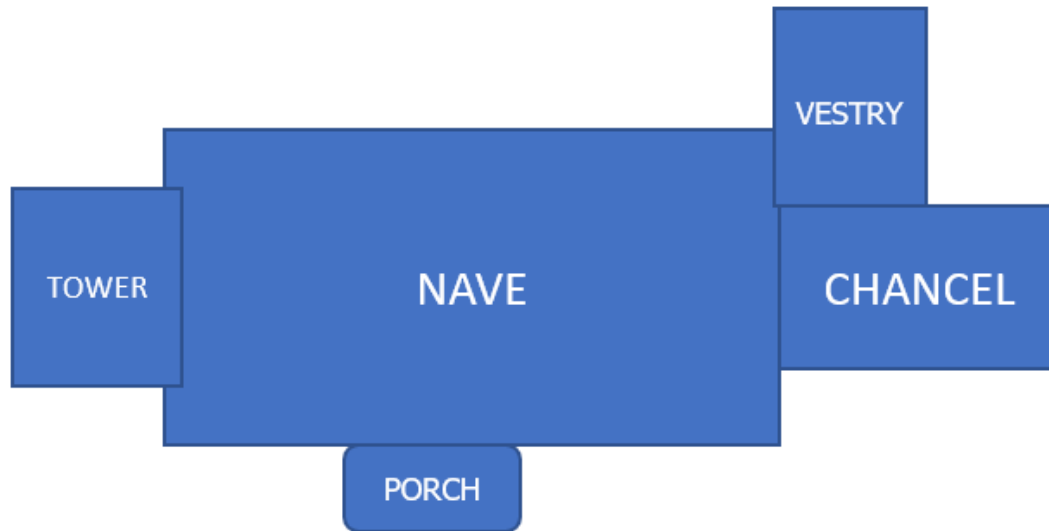
I would like to thank the following for their tremendous help:  
David Long, John Wilcox and Graham Bohannon for photographs and support.

Vince Russett for inspiration, guidance and editing.

Chris Short

October 2022

**WICK ST LAWRENCE**  
**ST LAWRENCE CHURCH - INSIDE**



**PLAN – NOT TO SCALE**

## SOUTH PORCH



The porch was rebuilt in 1865.



Inside – decorated for Harvest Home.



The niche above the inner door may once have held a statue of St Lawrence.



The lion's head is said to symbolise the struggle against evil.



The two doors on the west wall access to a stone newel staircase which once led to gallery where the choir sang psalms on Palm Sunday and other occasions.





The archway, left, on the lower matches the equivalent door in the 13<sup>th</sup> century porch at Congresbury, the former mother church door (see the photo below).





This stoupe niche to the right of the entrance to the nave once held a basin containing holy water. Those entering dipped their fingers and crossed themselves, in remembrance of baptismal vows.





On the east wall is the bier. The associated plaque is below.

The bier is likely to date from somewhere between 1683 and 1757. It was in use up until the 1930s to transport the deceased in their coffins from their house to the church. It is a popular local belief that the coffins did not always go by road, but crossed fields and ditches to take the most direct route.

Three memorial slabs lie against the east wall.



The north corner slab. Below is its inscription.

SACRED TO THE MEMORIES OF  
JOHN THOMAS,  
SON OF SAMUEL THOMAS ESQ<sup>r</sup> OF THIS PARISH  
AND MARY HIS WIFE,  
WHO DIED 7<sup>th</sup> NOV<sup>r</sup> 1811, AGED 38 YEARS.  
ALSO OF SARAH,  
DAUGHTER OF THE SAID SAMUEL AND MARY THOMAS,  
AND WIFE OF ROBERT JEY OF QUEEN CAMEL  
IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET ESQ<sup>r</sup>  
WHO DIED 7<sup>th</sup> SEP<sup>r</sup> 1813, AGED 47 YEARS.  
ALSO OF THE SAID MARY THOMAS,  
WHO DIED 19<sup>th</sup> JULY 1815, AGED 79 YEARS.  
ALSO OF THE SAID SAMUEL THOMAS,  
WHO DIED 13<sup>th</sup> AUG<sup>r</sup> 1815, AGED 77 YEARS,  
ALSO OF SAMUEL THOMAS,  
SON OF THE ABOVE NAMED SAMUEL AND MARY THOMAS  
WHO DIED 28<sup>th</sup> NOV<sup>r</sup> 1824, AGED 52 YEARS.  
ALSO OF MARY THOMAS,  
THE LAST SURVIVING CHILD  
OF THE ABOVE NAMED SAMUEL AND MARY THOMAS,  
WHO DIED 25<sup>th</sup> MARCH 1835, AGED 64 YEARS.  
BY WHOSE DIRECTION THIS MONUMENT  
WAS ERECTED.

The next slab to the right.



In Memory of  
*VALENTINI SHEPPARD*  
of this Parish who departed this life  
the 16<sup>th</sup> day of May 1816  
Aged 60 Years.

Also *MARY SHEPPARD* widow of the above  
*VALENTINI SHEPPARD* who departed  
this life the 27<sup>th</sup> day of September 1822  
Aged 60 Years.

Also *SARAH* Wife of M<sup>r</sup> *JOHN COOK*  
of Cleveland and only *Daughter* of the above  
*VALENTINI* and *MARY SHEPPARD* who  
departed this life the 30<sup>th</sup> day of Nov<sup>r</sup> 1824  
Aged 58 Years.

Also *HENRY* son of the above  
*VALENTINI* and *MARY SHEPPARD*  
who died March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1811  
Aged 59 Years.

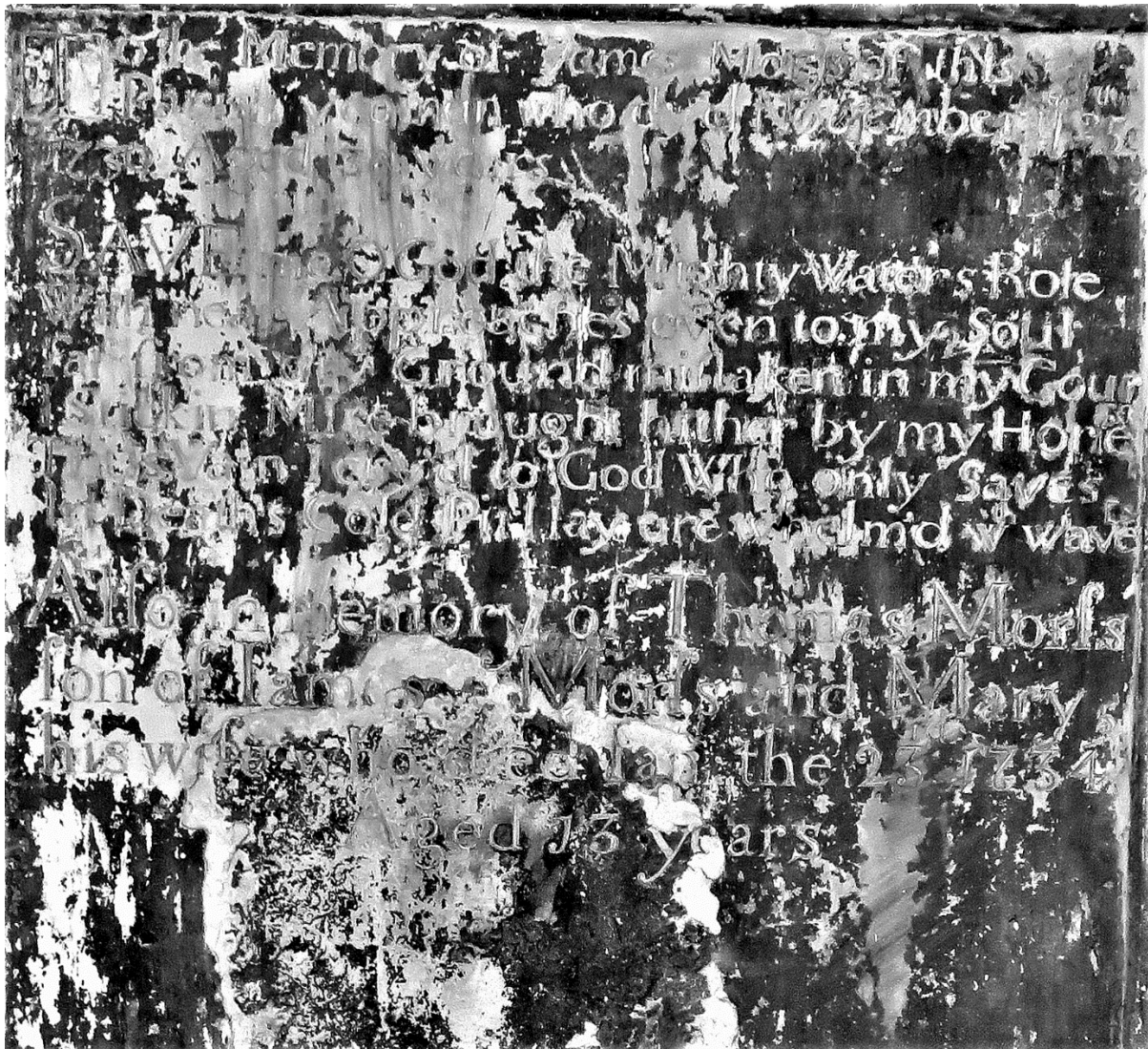
The memorial reads:

In Memory of  
VALENTINE SHEPPARD  
of this Parish who departed this life  
The 16<sup>th</sup> day of May 1816  
Aged 60 Years  
Also ANN SHEPPARD relict of the above  
VALENTINE SHEPPARD who departed  
this life the 27<sup>th</sup> day of September 1822  
Aged 60 years  
Also SARAH wife of JOHN COOK  
of CLEVEDON and only daughter of the above  
VALENTINE and ANN SHEPPARD who  
departed this life the 30<sup>th</sup> day of Nov 1824  
Aged 38 Years  
Also HENRY son of the above  
VALENTINE & ANN SHEPPARD  
Who died March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1844  
Aged 59 Years



The final slab.





The memorial tablet, removed for safety reasons from inside the church, is inscribed

'To the Memory of James Morss of this  
 Parish Yeoman who died November y<sup>e</sup> 25th  
 1730 Aged 38 years  
 SAVE me O God the Mighty Waters Role  
 With near Approaches even to my Soul  
 far from dry Ground mistaken in my Cour[se]  
 I stick in Mire brought hither by my Horse  
 Thus Vain I cried to God Who only Saves  
 In Death's Cold Pit I lay ore whelm'd w<sup>th</sup> waves  
 Also in memory of Thomas Morss  
 son of James Morss and Mary  
 his wife who died Jan the 23<sup>rd</sup> 1734  
 Aged 13 years

The verse is a parody of Psalm 69. Save me O God for the waters are come in unto my soul.

It is believed that James was trying to ford the Congresbury Yeo when he became stuck. This is supported by Francis Knight in his book *The Seaboard of Mendip* where he refers to the tablet "in memory of a man who having lost his way was overtaken by the tide and drowned."



The south window of the porch.



## THE NAVE



Looking west.



Looking east



Looking east

## SOUTH WALL



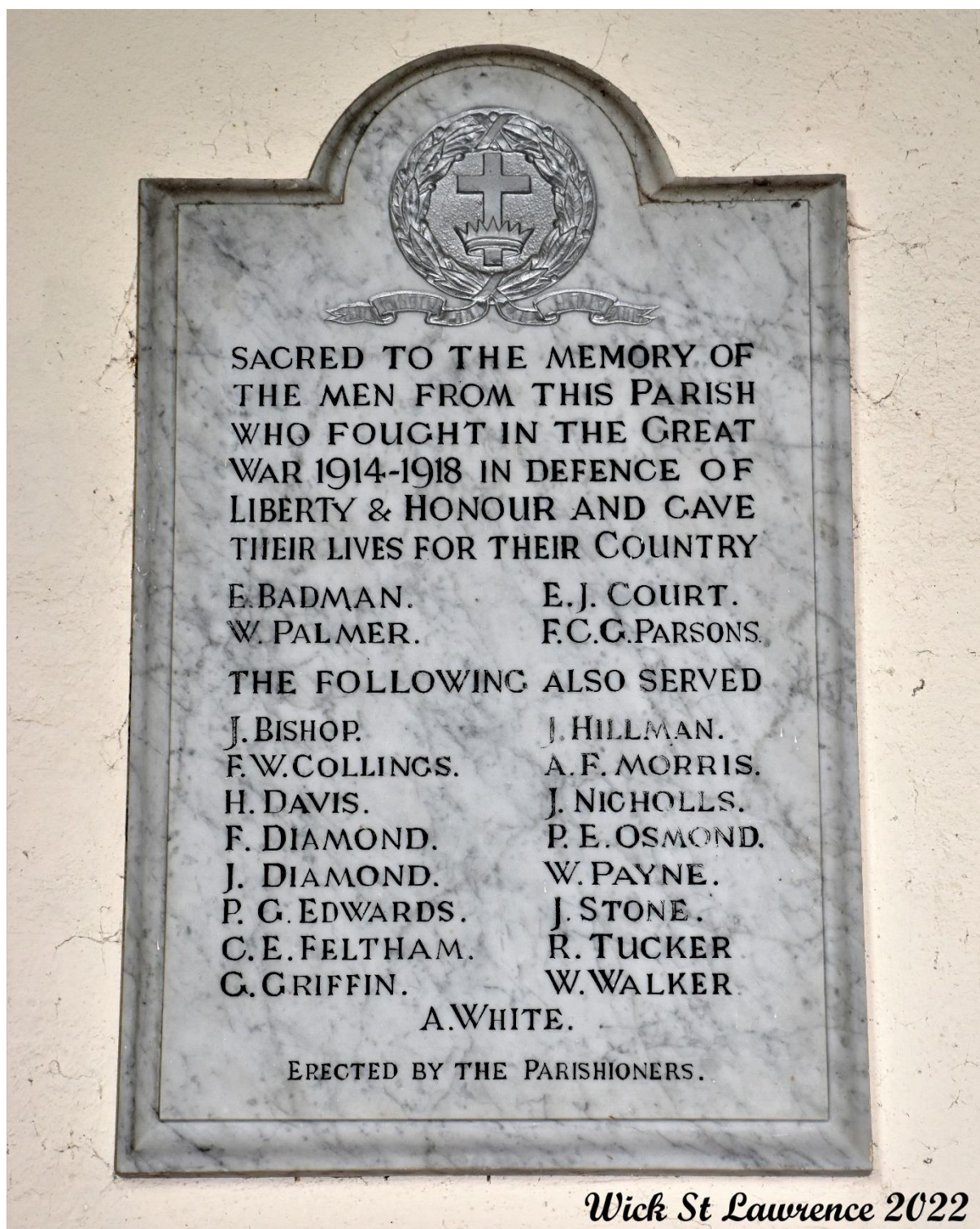
Near the entrance is this Norman plain bowl font perhaps from an earlier church. The plinth was added in 1841.



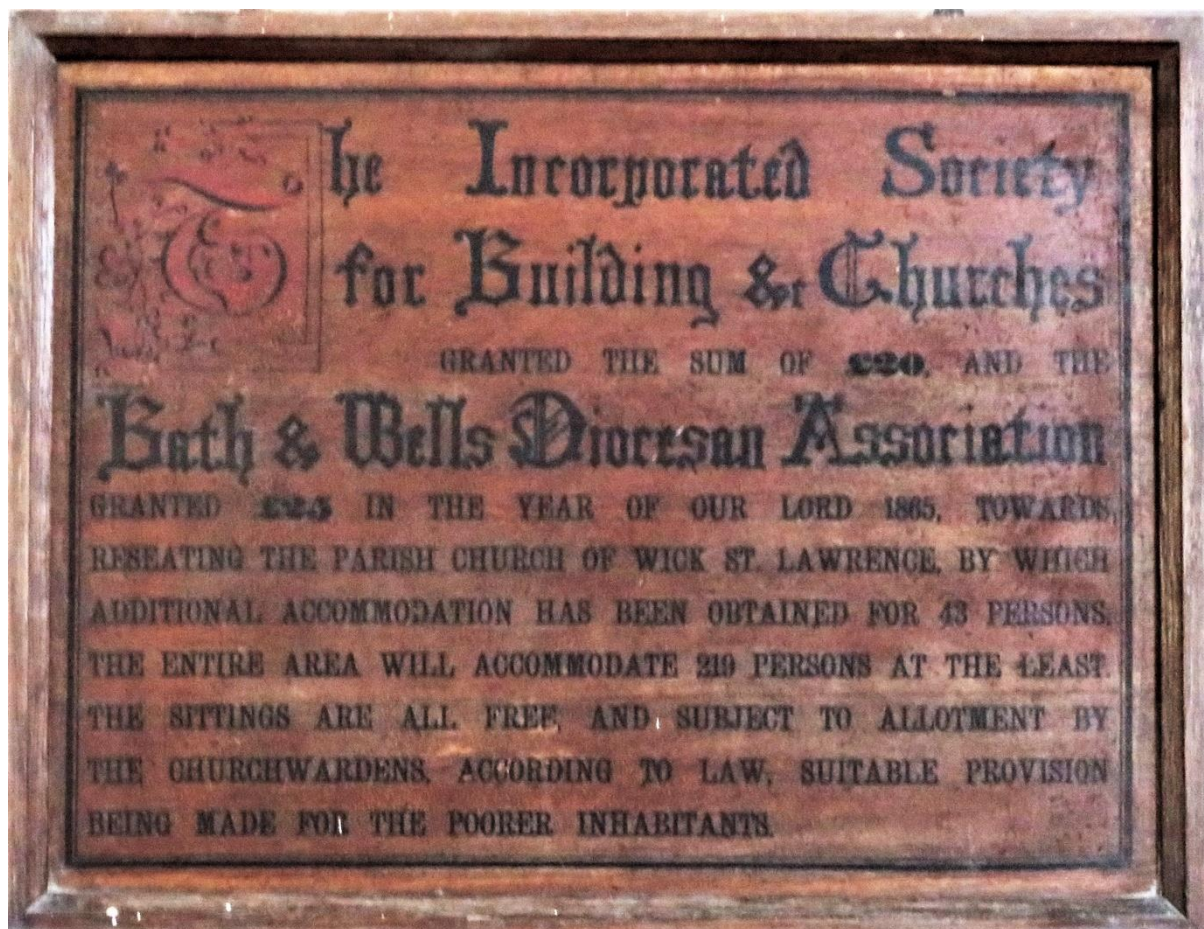
*Wick St Lawrence 2022*



*Wick St Lawrence 2022*



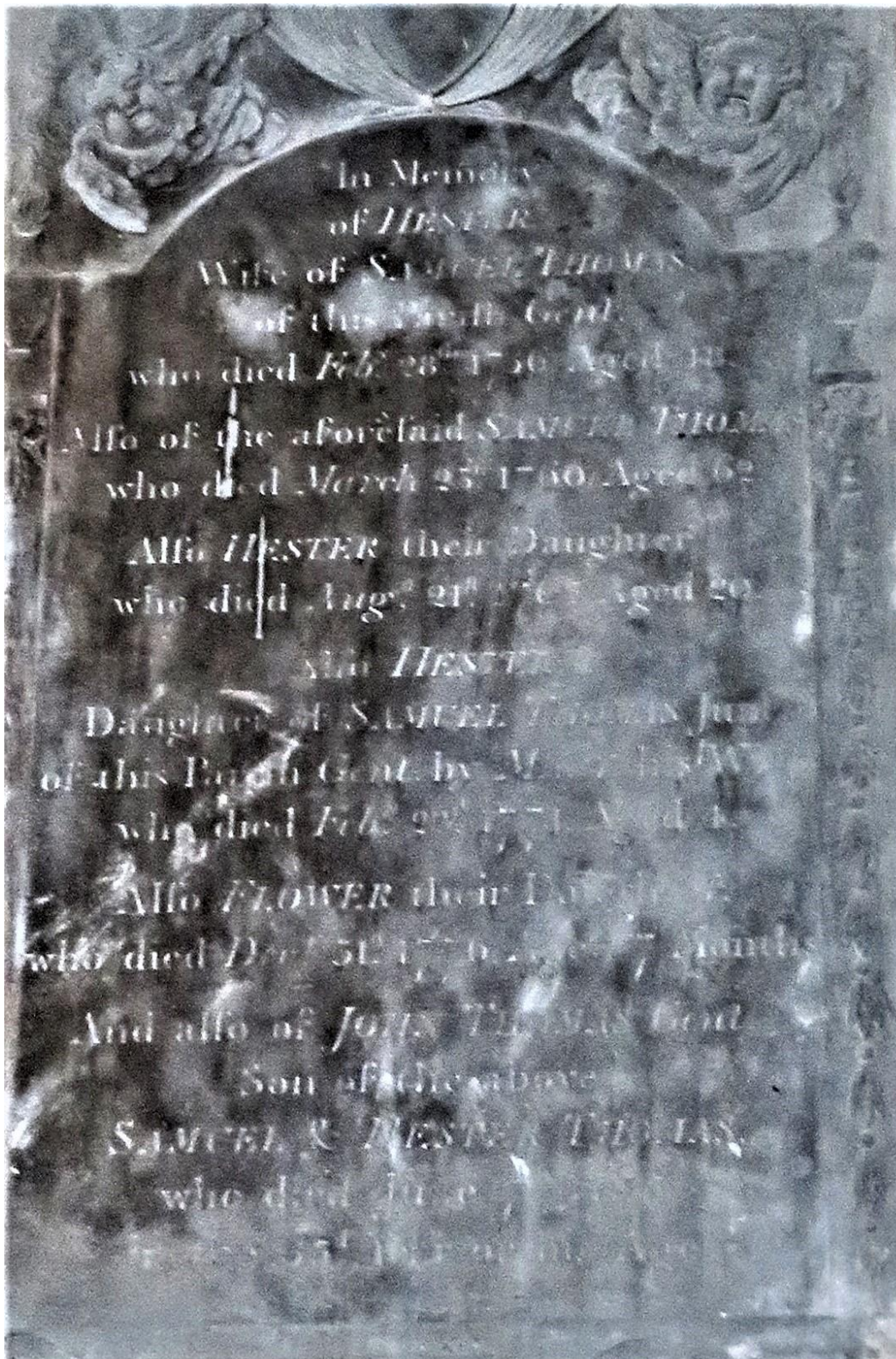
To the east of the entrance door is a First World War memorial plaque.



This plaque is to the west of the entrance door.



Two memorial plaques are on the far west of the south wall.



The inscription is below.



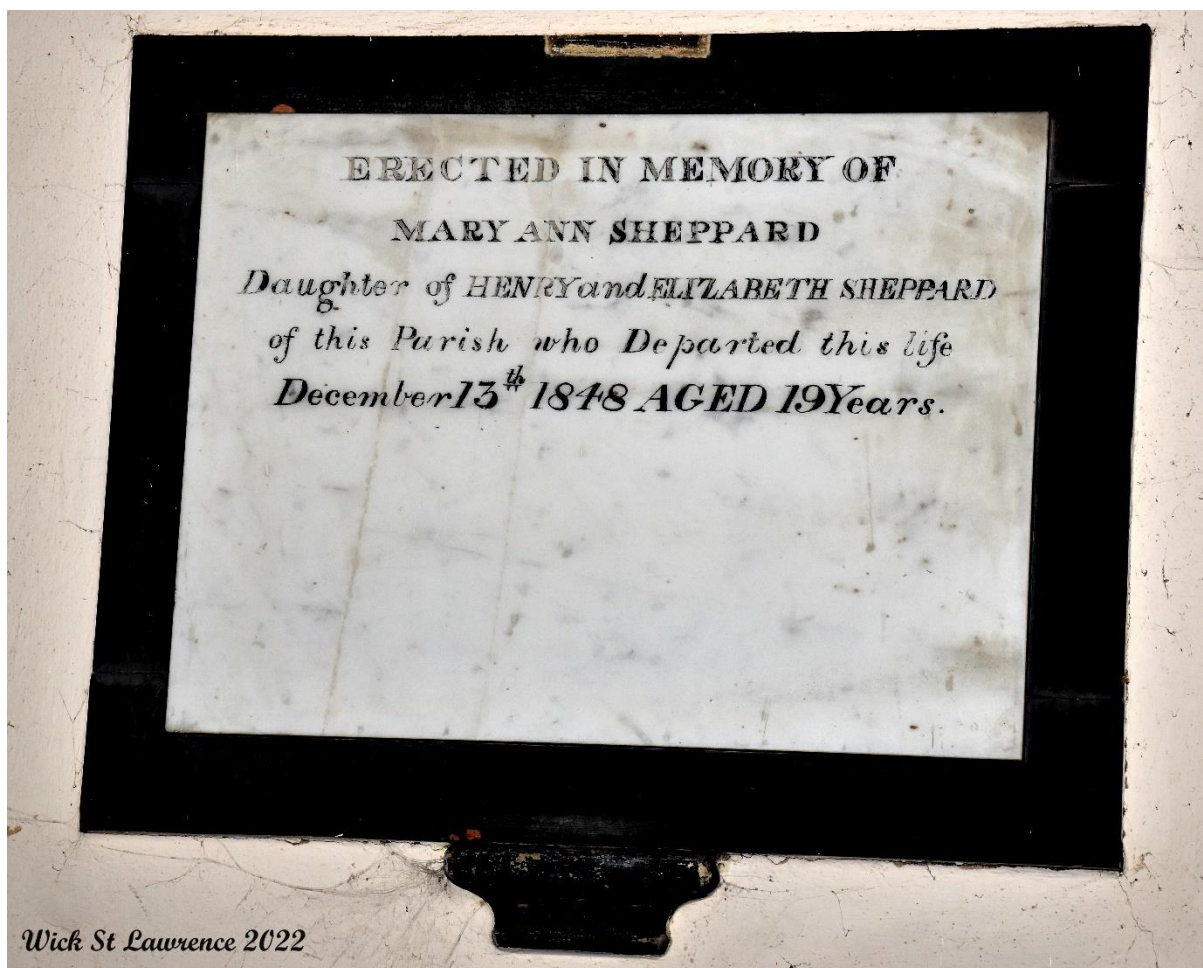
In Memory  
of HESTER  
Wife of SAMUEL THOMAS  
of this Parish Gent  
who died February 28<sup>th</sup> 1736 Aged 48  
Also of the aforesaid SAMUEL THOMAS  
Who died March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1760 Aged 62  
Also HESTER their daughter  
Who died August 21<sup>st</sup> 1763 Aged 20 Years  
Also HESTER  
Daughter of SAMUEL THOMAS Jun  
of this Parish Gent by MARY his Wife  
who died Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> 1771 Aged 4(.)  
Also FLOWER their Daughter  
Who died Dec 31<sup>st</sup> 1776 Aged 7 Months  
And also of JOHN THOMAS Gent  
Son of the above  
SAMUEL & HESTER THOMAS  
who died June 17 (...)  
In the 35<sup>th</sup> Year of his Age



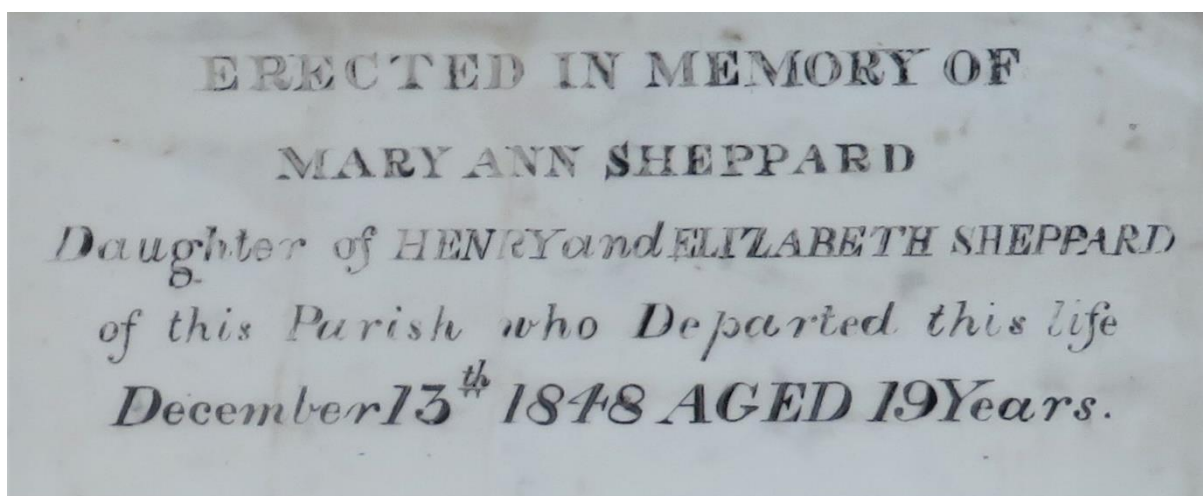
The inscription is below.

Neare this place lieth the bodys of Henry  
Sheppard Gent & Mary his wife of  
this Prsh he Departed this life April  
25<sup>th</sup> 1716 Aged 73 years She died  
June ye 1<sup>st</sup> 1721 Aged 76 years Like wise  
Six of their children viz Henry Hester  
Ann Flower Patience & Florence Henry died  
July ye 26<sup>th</sup> 1671 Aged year and 3 months  
Hester died in 1678 Aged 4 years Ann  
died in 1676 Aged 7 months Flower  
died Spr ye 16<sup>th</sup> 1701 Aged 18 years  
Patience died Octor ye 8<sup>th</sup> 1711 Aged 31  
years Florence died December 1714 Aged  
40 years wch sd Florence was married to  
Joseph Cook of Ebdon two of their child  
ren Viz Flower (&) Mary Flower died  
December 29<sup>th</sup> 1706 Aged 3 years  
Mary died December 1714 Aged 8 years

**NORTH WALL**



*Wick St Lawrence 2022*



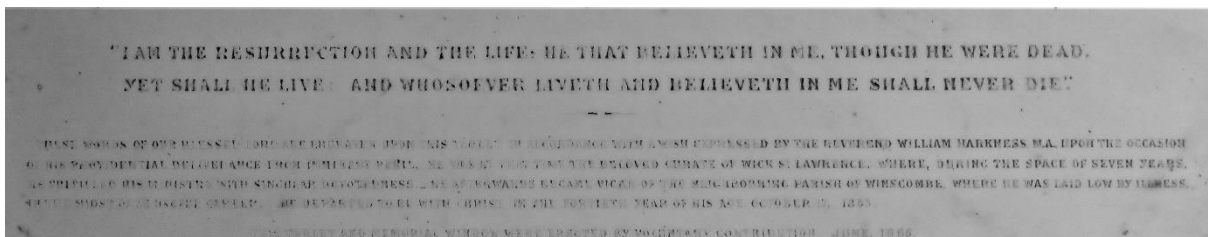
On the far west of the north wall is this plaque



On the north wall (almost opposite the entrance door and to the left) is the blocked up north door. Originally for processional use it may have been sealed to prevent draughts.



To the right of the blocked door is a memorial window and plaque to the Reverend William Harkness.



The plaque below the window reads:

"I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE. HE THAT BELIEVETH IN ME, THOUGH HE WERE DEAD YET SHALL HE LIVE AND WHOSOEVER LIVETH AND BELIEVETH IN ME SHALL NEVER DIE."

THESE WORDS OF OUR BLESSED LORD ARE ENGRAVEN UPON THIS TABLET IN ACCORDANCE WITH A WISH EXPRESSED BY THE REVEREND WILLIAM HARKNESS M.A. ON THE OCCASION OF HIS PROVIDENTIAL DELIVERANCE FROM IMMINENT PERIL. HE WAS AT THAT TIME BELOVED CURATE OF WICK ST LAWRENCE, WHERE DURING THE SPACE OF SEVEN YEARS, HE FULFILLED HIS MINISTRY WITH SINGULAR DEVOTEDNESS. HE AFTERWARDS BECAME VICAR OF THE NEIGHBOURING PARISH OF WINSCOMBE WHERE IN THE MIDST OF A USEFUL CAREER HE DEPARTED TO BE WITH CHRIST IN THE FORTIETH YEAR OF HIS AGE OCTOBER 17, 1863.

THIS TABLET AND MEMORIAL WINDOW WERE ERECTED BY VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION JUNE 1865

The providential deliverance from imminent peril was a pond at Rose Farm into which his horse and carriage had tipped.



The deal prayer desk probably dates from about 1865, as do the pews,



End decoration.



End decoration.



To the left of the pulpit on the north wall is a lower and an upper door. This was the stair access to the rood loft, above the screen, which had a platform stretching the width of the church. On it would have been rood, or large crucifix. The priest may have occasionally preached from here, and the church orchestra or band played, maybe accompanying a soloist from the choir.

The screen was a carved wooden affair. It is said to have survived the aftermath of the Dissolution of the Monasteries since the churchwardens' accounts show that the screen door lock was repaired in 1753, and in 1762 a new lock fitted.





This magnificent pulpit was given to the church by John Carr, Lord of the Manor of Wick St Lawrence, whose father, 30 years after the Dissolution, had purchased Woodspring Priory.

Pevsner states that it was reputedly brought from the priory in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century and describes it as *"One of the finest medieval stone pulpits in Somerset, very daintily detailed, with panelled stem, panelled body and frizzes of quatrefoils, fluerons, horizontal leaf – trails etc."*

The pulpit was severely damaged by a lightning strike in 1791 but skillfully repaired. It was slightly enlarged in 1865 when all paint was removed.





A model of the church and associated plaque is to the left of the pulpit.



The church model sits on the parish chest, which held parishioners' wills, doctrine books and parish registers and records. This chest may date to the 18th century and had three locks, with different keys, each in the possession of two or more church officials so that no single person could open it. In 1825 an iron chest (now lost) was purchased for £4.15.00. A large sum then.



The nave roof.

## CHANCEL



The oil lamp is on the right of the chancel arch. By the new organ.



The plaque on the lectern reads:

IN MEMORY OF  
JANET REDDING  
1924-1981  
FROM HER  
FRIENDS





The organ.

The Reverend Harkness presented the first organ in 1848, when curate. Another curate the Reverend Aubrey Townsend, was so pleased with the choir, (formed in 1861), that in 1863 he presented a new organ costing £36.

Five years later the parishioners raised £120 for yet another. Made by W. Sweetland of Bath in 1867 this is the one we can see today, with the plaque below, which was in regular use until 1993, when a modern pipeless model was presented by the late Mrs. Pamela Spurner of Wick St Lawrence. This stands on the south side of the church.



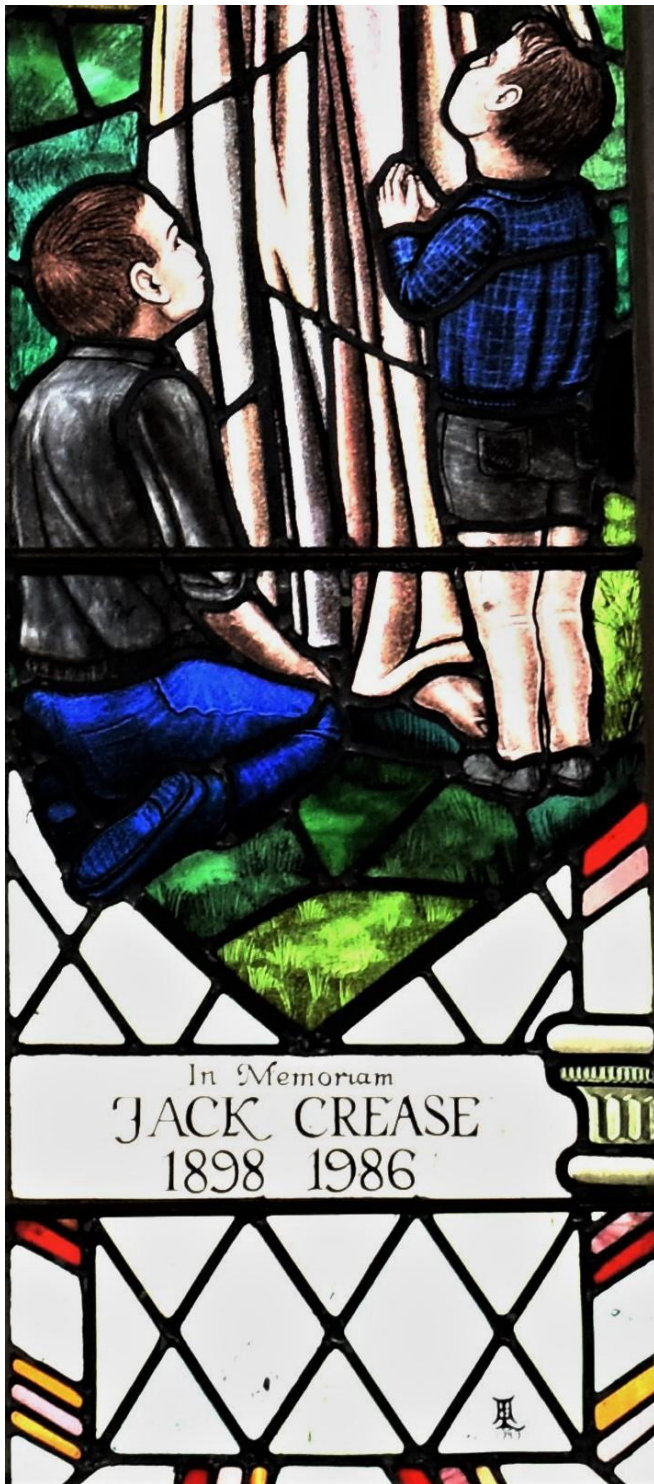


To the right of the old organ is a passageway leading to the vestry room erected on the north east side of the church in the 19th century. On the right of this passage is the window below.





The east wall chancel window



This window is dedicated to  
JACK CREASE  
1898 to 1986 a  
much-loved patron  
of the church.



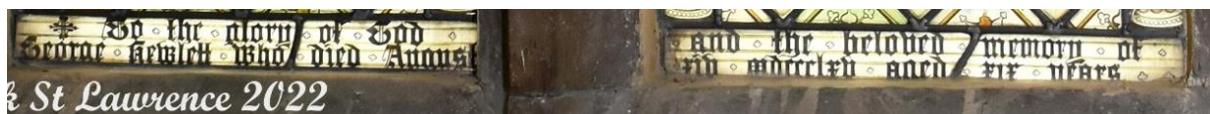
The southeast wall in the chancel.



To the right of the altar on the south wall is this window.



Wick St Lawrence 2022

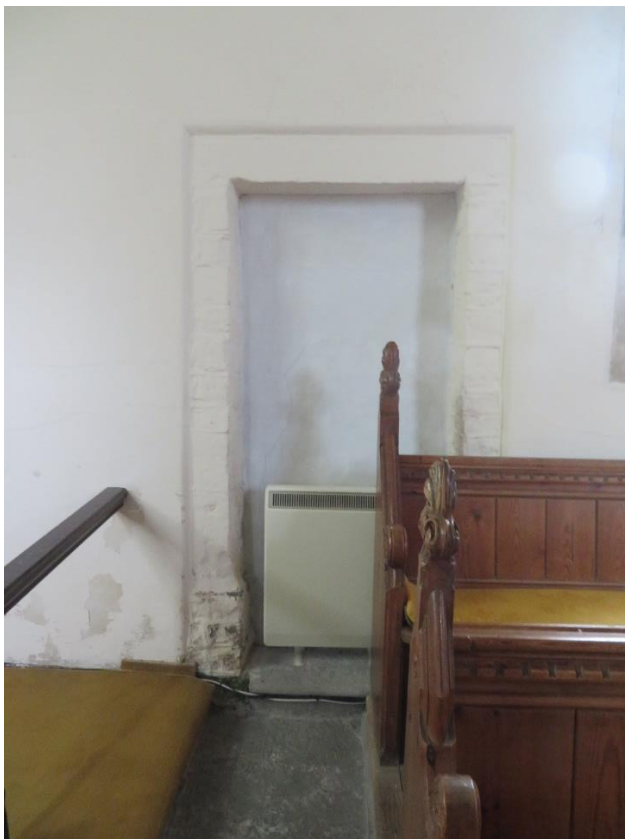


The inscription reads:

To the glory of God  
 and the beloved memory of  
 George Hewlett Who died August  
 xiv (14<sup>th</sup>) mdccclxv (1865) aged xix (19) years'



Below the window is this piscina which was used to wash the vessels after mass. Little of the original work remains.



On the south wall the now blocked priest's door allowed entry to the chancel without having to go through the nave.



## FLOOR – GRAVE STONES

On the floor, mainly in the east of the church, can be seen gravestones, mostly of the Sheppard family, local landowners.

These are the remains of those dug up in the mid-19th century installation of underfloor heating.

A selection is below.

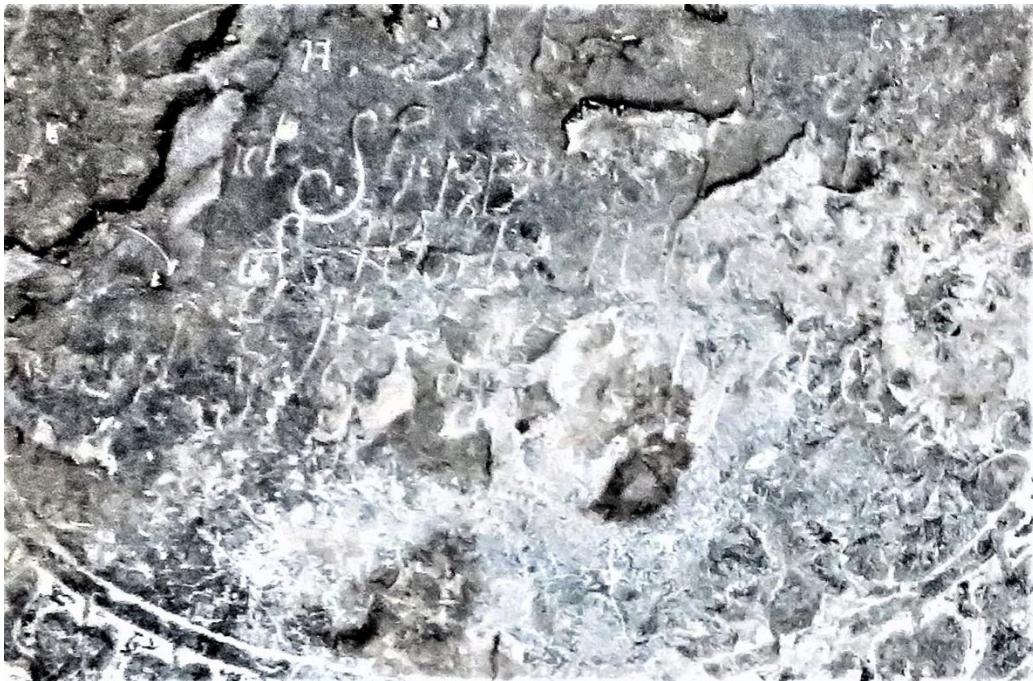


Inscribed FE (*Wife*) OF JOHN



The inscription is partly obscured but part of it reads

'...ST  
[J]OHN ANDRE[WS]  
] VS DIED THE 16[  
]HE 13<sup>th</sup> 1691  
]LSO IOHN THE  
SON OF IOHN  
[---]ND  
]THE  
F'

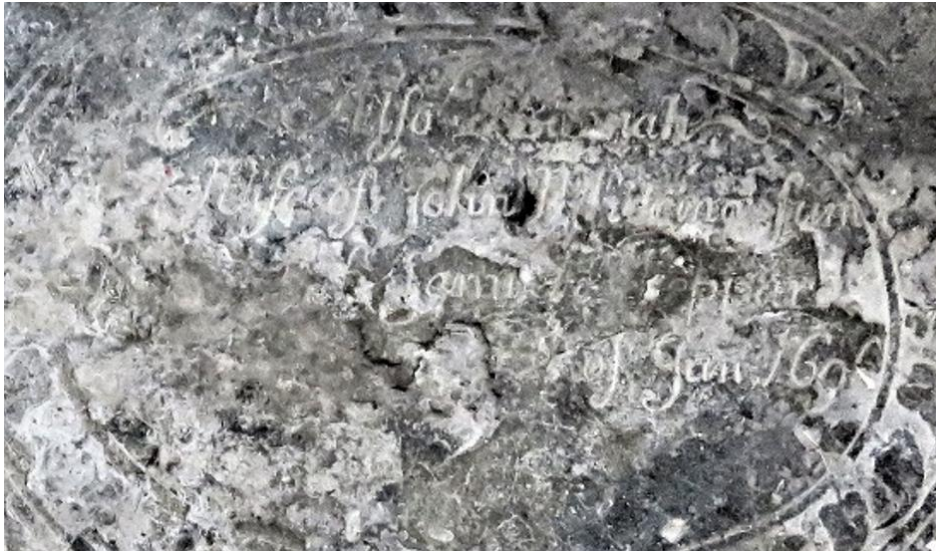


Left hand side reads

'[Dan]iel Sheppard [-]  
of Wor[le?] W[---]  
died y<sup>e</sup> [---]'

Right hand side reads

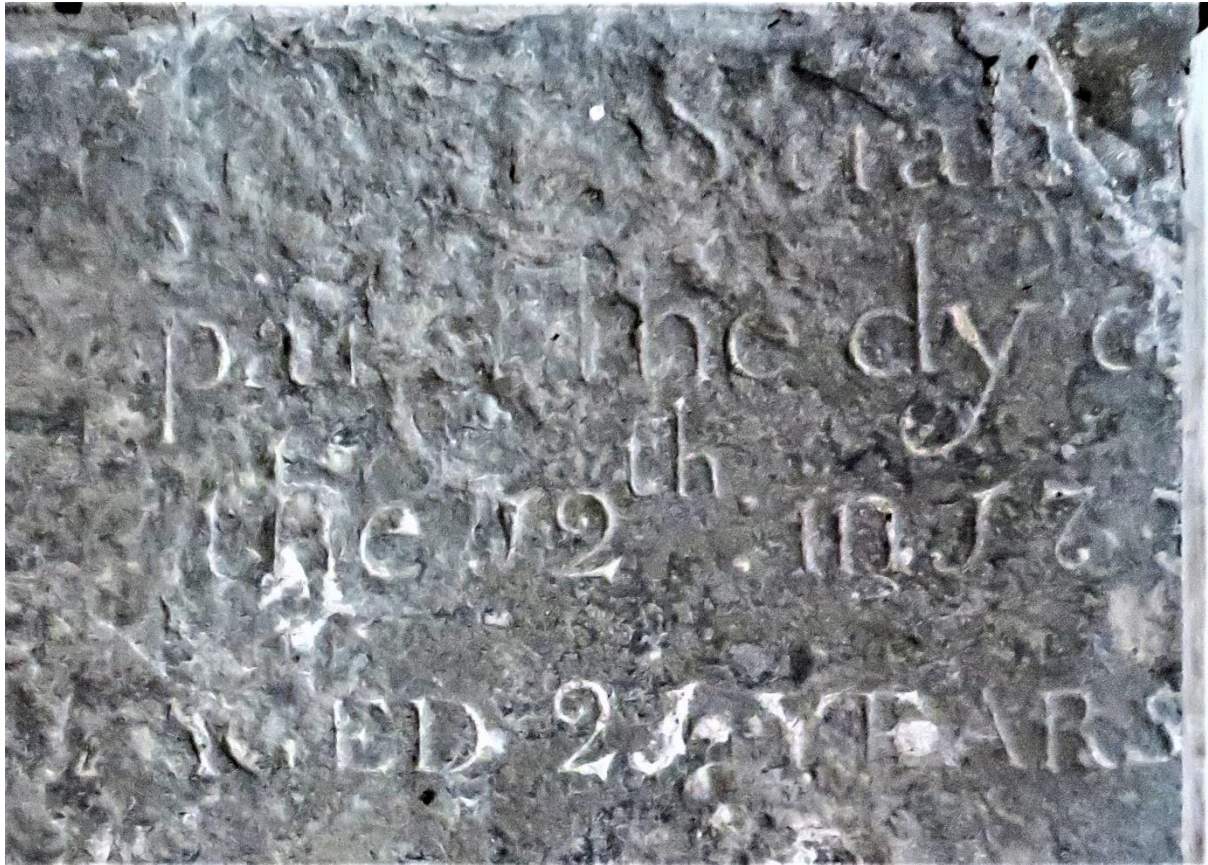
'Also Hannah  
the Wife of John [----] sum  
of Sam[uel] [---]  
[---]of Jan 1696'



Right hand side. This reads: Also ??  
Wife of John Manning (?)  
of Jan 169(5?)



Another slab. See below.



The inscription reads

'..Sarah  
[-] parish she dy'ed  
the 12<sup>th</sup> :in 173[-]  
AGED 21 YEARS'

## WEST WALL AND TOWER





The plaque on the left has an inscription as below

This Monument is erected to the Memory of

George Sheppard of this Parish Gent

Who departed this life on J ???

Aged ? Years

Also

Betty his Daughter who departed this life the ? May 17??

Aged ? Years

And Also

George his son who departed this life on J ? 17?

Aged (..) Years

*Ancestry UK burial records show:*

*George Sheppard January 11<sup>th</sup> 1725*

*George Sheppard Gentleman July 11<sup>th</sup> 1753*

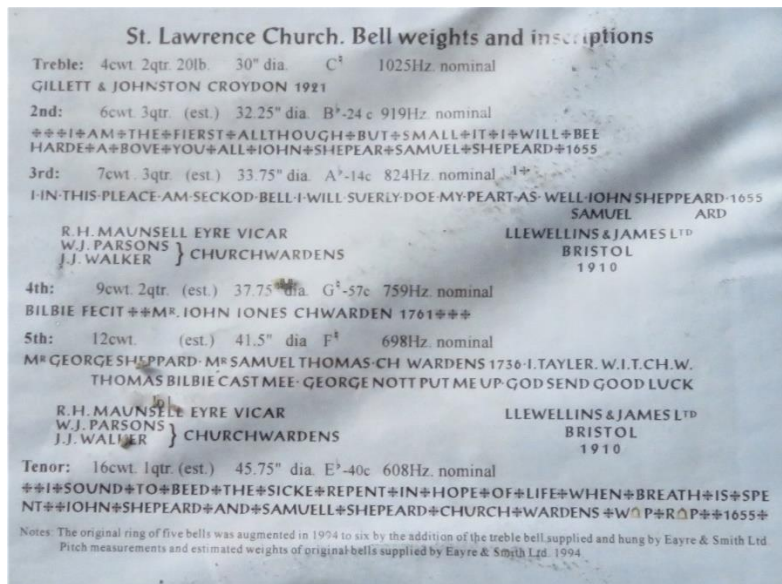
*Betty Sheppard 1 May 1732*



The bell ropes in the tower and below the blocked up door to the tower.







A notice on a tower wall.

Treble: GILLETT & JOHNSTON CROYDON 1921

2nd: +++I+AM+THE+FIERST+ALLTHOUGH+BUT+SMALL+IT+I+WILL+BEE  
HARDE+A+BOVE+YOU+ALL+IOHN+SHEPEAR+SAMUEL+SHEPEARD+1655

3rd:  
I·IN·THIS·PLAEC·AM·SECKOD·BELL·I·WILL·SUERLY·DOE·MY·PEART·AS·WELL·IOHN  
SHEPPEARD·1655 /  
SAMUEL [--]ARD

R.H.MAUNSELL EYRE VICAR	LLEWELLINS & JAMES LTD
W.J.PARSONS } CHURCHWARDENS	BRISTOL
J.J.WALKER }	1910

4th: BILBIE FECIT ++M<sup>R</sup> IOHN IONES CHWARDEN 1761+++

5th: M<sup>R</sup> GEORGE SHEPPARD·M<sup>R</sup> SAMUEL THOMAS·CH WARDENS  
1736·I.TAYLER.W.I.T.CH.W. /  
THOMAS BILBIE CAST MEE·GEORGE NOTT PUT ME UP·GOD SEND GOOD LUCK

R.H.MAUNSELL EYRE VICAR	LLEWELLINS & JAMES LTD
W.J.PARSONS } CHURCHWARDENS	BRISTOL
J.J.WALKER }	1910

Tenor: ++I+SOUND+TO+BEED+THE+SICKE+REPENT+IN+HOPE+OF+  
LIFE+WHEN+ BREATH+IS+SPE /  
NT++IOHN+SHEPEARD+AND+SAMUELL+SHEPEARD+CHURCH+  
WARDENS+W P R P ++1655+

The first bell was second hand and came from a demolished church in Liverpool. It was hung in April 1994. It was cast by GILLETT & JOHNSON CROYDON in 1921.

Regarding the sixth bell, W.P and R.P. are William and Richard Purdoe, bell founders of Closworth near Sherbourne.



The west door.

## REFERENCES

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Historic England - Listing	<a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1129773">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1129773</a>