



A Short Description & History of St. Martin's Church

St. Martin's Church is an Anglican Church built around the 12th Century of Anglo-Saxon Origin and is Grade I listed. It was listed on 20 December 1960 and has an English Heritage Building ID No. of 316139. Other sections date from the 13th to 15th centuries. It was restored in 1850 and more building updates took place in 1864 with only the tower and other perpendicular work left untouched. The present church has a square 13th or 14th century tower with gargoyles and embattlements and a large porch where the Roses of the Houses of York and Lancaster suggest it as a being an addition made during the reign of Henry VII.

The church is built of Ashlar and ironstone rubble with stone slate roofs. It consists of a West tower, nave, aisles and chancel. The Tower is built of rubble stone.

There are also Tudor arch style windows in the north and south aisles. The Reverend Edward Lamber added some Gothic compartments under the porch in 1818. There are worn stone seats of free-stone either side of the porch. A rood loft can be seen between the aisle and the chancel which contains lattice work carving. The chancel itself contains memorials to the Hungerford family one of which is an exceptional Baroque marble monument with bust, putti, twisted columns and emblems of peace and war to G. Hungerford, who died 1697. There is a wall plaque in memory of Rev. J. Wilson who died in 1724 and another to Rev. N. Hume who died in 1804. A monument of John Townsend D.D stands before the communion rails. He was expelled from the vicarage and his stall in Salisbury Cathedral by the Puritans during the Commonwealth period but was later restored in 1660. He built and endowed an almshouse at Calne for eight poor women in 1682. Armorial floor slabs can be found in memory of W. Hungerford and Rev. J. Tounson [Townsend] who died in 1697.

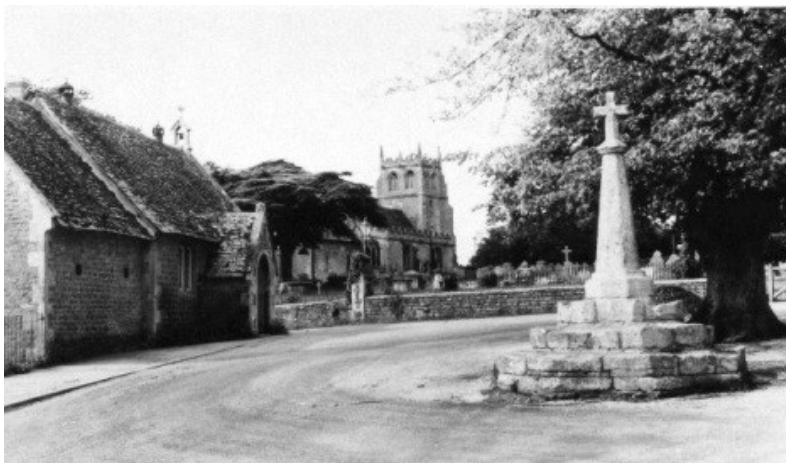
The font is as old as the church (12th century) and an organ is housed in the gallery above. The nave is Anglo Saxon and has long and short quoins. The arcades again of the 12th century were remodelled in 1850. There are three bays, circular piers and double chamfered pointed arches. The West window is in the Decorated style by Butterfield (1862-3).

There are original pieces of stained glass in the head of the north aisle, north east window. The Chalice dates from 1662. Two twin bell openings can be found with six bells of various dates from 1685, 1736 and 1826. There was a Sanctus bell in the original cote which still stands at the east end of the nave, with traces of the 'tow side' window through which it was rung. There is a mosaic sanctuary floor laid in 1907.

William Lisle Bowles (24 September 1762 – 7 April 1850) was an English poet and critic and in 1804 became vicar of Bremhill. In the same year he was collated by Bishop Douglas to a prebendal stall in Salisbury Cathedral. In 1818 he was made chaplain to the Prince Regent, and in 1828 he was elected residentiary canon of Salisbury. Much earlier, in 1789, he had published, in a very small quarto volume, *Fourteen Sonnets*, which were received with extraordinary favour, not only by the general public, but by such men as Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth.

The village war memorial sits within the churchyard which is a very peaceful setting. Many of the older headstones date from the 1700s although the inscriptions are almost impossible to read. In springtime the churchyard is bathed in pink cherry blossom which have been planted along the longish pathway leading to the church entrance. The churchyard encompasses the church entirely and there is a pathway right around the perimeter hugging the stone walls that encircle the church and churchyard. Several of the headstones within the churchyard have inscriptions written by the Rev. W. L. Bowles notably the Epitaph Benjamin Tremlyn, An Old Soldier who died in 1822, John Dark 1824, R. S. Smith 1832 and to John Harding 1835

The church is situated to the south side of the village and outside the church gates in the square sits the Bremhill Village Cross (below).



In October 2010 at a service of inauguration led by The Right Reverend Stephen Conway, the Bishop of Ramsbury, the parishes of Derry Hill, Bremhill and Foxham combined with that of Calne and Blacklands to form the Marden Vale Team Ministry.

For more information about listed building status please visit [British Listed Buildings](#)