



## The Parish Church of St. Margaret (Stratton Sci Margrette)

It is believed that there was originally an Anglo-Saxon wattle & thatch church on the site dating back before 1000 AD. It is referred to as Alien Priory at Stratton St. Margaret's, in Wiltshire in Dugdale's Monasticon Volume 6 Part 2. Vol. 6: 1056. It is recorded as Strattuna in some French documents of 1150. A Norman church was built in its place and the current Church of England parish church of St. Margaret of Antioch dates from the 13th century in the reign of [Edward I](#). (Edward Long Shanks who reigned 1272-1307 AD). Built about 1280 it was eventually dedicated to St Margaret in 1294, and appears in her dowry of 1316, the first incumbent was appointed in 1308, Reginald de Altaworth of Highworth), the third vicar Laurentius was believed to be a Stratton man. By order in council in July 1852 the vicarage was transferred from the Bishop of Salisbury to the Bishop of Gloucester. The parish registers date from 1608. In 1898 there were 350 sittings by 1915 this had increased to 420. The churchyard has been twice enlarged, in 1896 and the last addition in 1901, when new oak gates were put up. 1912 saw area of Parish Pound absorbed into churchyard, Parish Poor house and 17<sup>th</sup> century Mortuary Chapel demolished. Christmas 1938 saw the first Crib and Nativity plays.

The Parish has been divided in recent times St Barnabus, Gorse Hill became its own parish in 1898, St Philip Upper Stratton in 1932.

The church building consists of chancel (area around the altar with stained glass picturing the life of Christ.), nave (with aisles dating about 1280 with 4 bays of particularly graceful arcades supported by slender individually designed round columns with richly moulded capitals of nail head and dog tooth design), organ chamber (originally from 1892 the 1924 replacement pipe organ was removed in 2008) and vestry. The south porch is of the 14th century and has its original roof, the small room over the porch is long gone but its stone access stairway remains. The clerestory and roof over the nave are of the 16th century tie-beam form. There is a western tower with a low spire and a vane. There are numerous later additions completed during Victorian restorations during period 1846-1848 by the architect [Anthony Salvin](#) and partial rebuilding in the middle of the 20th century. A Norman door remains in the north wall along with a recessed tomb. There was a one roomed church school next to tower, this was removed in mid Victorian times. The historian John Aubrey's notes state that there was "a window on the south side of the church wherein is an image of St. Katherine with her wheel ([St. Catherine of Alexandria](#)) and another which he supposed to be St. Margaret". St. Catherine of Alexandria 282-305 was the daughter of King Costus & Queen Sabinella. She converted to Christianity aged 14 and became a noted scholar. She was put to death by Emperor Maxentius after converting members of his court including his wife. St. Margaret of Antioch 289-304 was born to a Pagan priest and



on conversion to Christianity was thrown out by her father. After refusing to marry Olybrius the local Roman Governor of what is now Turkey she was tortured and put to death? These were two of the 14 saints who spoke to Joan of Arc.

The church had problems with too many sparrows, and there was a price on their head. In October 1825 £2 5s ½d was paid out at 3s per bird, in 1832 they were worth 6d each. *North Wilts Herald 02-12-1927*.

There was a Parochial school from 1835-1869. In 1844 teachers were paid the following, Mr Povey for ¾ year £1 5s, Mr Barnes, ¼ year 8s 4d, Mr Bisley 1 year £16s 8d. *North Wilts Herald 02-12-1927*

In 1835 the parish population was 924, it was in diocese of Sarum and annual value was £216, details from Liber Ecclesiasticus.

1841 the North Aisle was re-roofed at a cost of £90 18s 7d, the old lead was sold for £73. *North Wilts Herald 02-12-1927*

In 1845 the diocese authorised some major refurbishment. (*Hampshire Advertiser 25/01/1845 & Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette 23-01-1845*) The wall of the naïve being re-built and the roof repaired, the pews were also replaced, and layout improved.

The pulpit is dated 1848 and the lectern to 1896, the font dates from 1860 when the Saxon font (c.1280) disappeared. The oldest of the church plate which is a silver chalice and cover dated to 1570. The organ was refurbished by Messrs Gray & Davidson of London and re-opened 10 Feb 1897. The tower originally had a flagstaff topped by a gilded cockerel, these were damaged in a storm in 1938 and removed in 1962.

In 1862 the Parish collected £5 2s, for The Distress in the Manufacturing Districts Fund. (*The Western Daily Press 24-11-1862*).

In 1864 there was an Advert for minister at Stratton at £242 with residence. *Manchester Courier & Lancashire General Advertiser 24-06-1864*.

Fund started to re-build Glebe House at cost of £1116, a committee was appointed, and a bank account set up for donations. *Swindon Advertiser 21-11-1864*. They had reached £300 of the £500 needed for a matching donation from the Ecclesiastical Commission. *Swindon Advertiser 28-11-1864*. Advert for Tenders. *Swindon Advertiser 11-09-1865*.

Fund raising begins to purchase an organ. *Swindon Advertiser 13-01-1868*.

1868, Churchyard extension consecrated, by Bishop of Gloucester & Bristol, Dr. Ellicott, in addition a vestry has been built, the church heated, mosaic pavement in chancel and new carved oak seats in chancel, at a cost of nearly £500. In addition, Thomas Arkell, Esquire of Penhill has paid for three new stained windows in the chancel. A new churchyard wall still needs to be completed at about £100. *Swindon Advertiser 17-08-1868*.

1869 saw the church advertise for builders for Proposed new Schools, Master's house, and boundary walls, &c., at Stratton. (*Jackson's Oxford Journal 24-4-1869*), and a grant was received from Diocese of Gloucester in 1870.

The school Memorial Stone was laid by Mrs. David Archer of Kingsdown House. *Swindon Advertiser 26-07-1869*.

In 1879 the residence was worth £250 with house, population 2,521. *Cambridge Independent Press 28-06-1879*.

30-08-1890, A Stone Cross erected on the South Porch, unveiled by Mrs. Crawhill, it was given by Mr. Colborne and carved by Mr. Hoddinott. *North Wilts Herald 30-08-1940*.

At a Parochial Review in 190-3 it was decided that Stratton needed a second church to cover Kingsdown & Upper Stratton. *Swindon Advertiser 08-05-1903*.

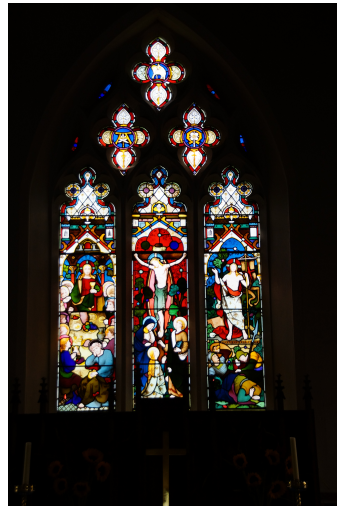
in the south aisle is a window, erected to the memory of the 64 men of the parish who fell in the Great War, 1914-18; the work was executed by Mr. Horace Wilkinson of London, at the cost of £180 and contains the figure of St. Alban *1922 Kelly's Directory*.

It was agreed to install Gas lighting. *North Wilts Herald 21-11-1924*.

Peal of Grandshire Triples (5,040 changes) was rung on Saturday to welcome new vicar, Rev. C L Malahar. Ringers were: R E Luton, T Moulden, G Lancaster, S Hopper, E J Berry, W B Kynaston, E J Wodroff, and F Stagg.

*North Wilts Herald 11-03-1932*.

On 04-09-1949 the Lord Bishop Suffragan of Malmesbury dedicated the East chapel as a war memorial.



## Bells

In 1553 there were 3 bells, of the current 8 bells the oldest is No.7 cast in 1669 by Edward Neale of Burford and engraved with the Royal Arms of Charles II. The tenor bell was cast in 1816 by G & G Mears, two more were added in 1902 the 3rd (paid for from a bequest by Albert Barnes, churchwarden, and a 4<sup>th</sup> in 1909, a further two were added in 1931/2, one a new treble was paid for by Stratton schoolchildren and bears the inscription "The children gave me", the other was the 2<sup>nd</sup>, in memory of Inis Martha Cripps-Day, daughter of General Klapps, General of the Hungarian forces, 2 other bells, the 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> were recast at the same time' they replaced a 1622 bell by Roger Pardue of Bristol engraved with Prince of Wales feathers and another dated 1669 also by Edward Neale. All the later bells were cast by Mears & Stainbank part of the 'Whitechapel Bell Foundry' which dates to the 16th century. During the Great War, the first lady ringer was recruited, Miss Nellie Moulden (later Mrs Ferris.) There is also a small sanctuary bell which is not normally used.



## Monuments

Three 17th century monuments are to be found in the north aisle. The first, dated 1645 is of painted wood and commemorates "William Lacy Alias Hedges of Kingsdown "; the second is of alabaster and dated 1640; to commemorate his wife Catherine Hedges. The last is a brass to "Catherine Wakeman of Nyth." dated 1649. There are also other plaques and monuments around the walls, one is to Kemble family, another two in memory of former vicar's wives (Goodinge & Nesbitt), two for Day family tomb, one to Rev. Septimus Isaac Crawhill M.A. vicar here, one to Frederick Day, missionary, killed in China, 1912 and one is to William Jones who died in a fire in Southampton. Quote from local Southampton paper of the time: - "The fire broke out at 11.15pm on November 7, 1837, in the stables of merchants King, Witt and Co whose warehouse fronted on to the High Street 100 yards from the quay. It is hard to imagine a worse place for a fire, for the goods stored there included 150lbs of gunpowder and thousands of gallons of oil, turpentine, resin, varnish, and other inflammables. "Then, sometime after midnight, there was a sudden series of explosions which destroyed the floors, roofs and joists and blew out the front of the building. Seventeen men perished immediately, five others died over the next few days and many more were crippled or otherwise badly injured. The youngest of the dead was 16, the eldest 50."

On the south wall, there is now a Brass War Memorial plaque with the list some of Stratton's fallen.

### **Other facts and Newspaper articles**

Church folk travelled a lot one curate of 1839 married in Wales –On the 12<sup>th</sup> inst., at the parish church of Llanilar, Cardiganshire, by the Rev. T. W. Jones, Incumbent of Llanavan-y-trawscoed, and Rev Mortimer L. Jones, Curate of St. Luke's, father and brother of the bridegroom, the Rev. Latimer Maurice Jones, Curate of Stratton St. Margaret, Wilts, to Elizabeth Anne Jones Hughes, only daughter of the late Thomas Hughes, Esq., of Pantygwyfol. *The Salisbury & Winchester Journal*, 22-10-1839.

A few days since, workmen involved in repairs came across a body, it no coffin and had been wrapped in lead, the skull had also been filled with lead. *The Bath Chronicle* 11-09-1845.

On Thursday next, July 29<sup>th</sup>, there will be Service in the Parish Church of Stratton St. Margaret, at half-past two o'clock, when a sermon will be preached by the Rev. J. J. Harlow, M.A., vicar of Kempsdord, Proctor in Convocation, and Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of this diocese. After which the Clergy, Choir, and congregation will proceed to the ground where the new schools are being erected, when a memorial stone will be laid by Mrs. David Archer, Kingsdown house. There will be a collection in the church towards the deficiency at present existing in the funds needed for completion of the schools. Subscription offerings, to be placed in the Alms dish, are earnestly requested from all who are friendly to the good work now being carried out, and any who may not be able to be present, may forward their subscriptions to the Vicar, or to any member of the Finance Committee which consists of:- David Archer, Esq, Kingsdown house, Mr. Arkell, The Malt house; Thomas Day, Esq, The Villa; and Mr. East, Stratton Street. *Swindon Advertiser* 26-07-1869.

Drainage of Spring water at the church has been completed and it is no longer to run pumps to clear water from graves before burials. *Swindon Advertiser* 29-11-1879.

£21 10s 7½d was paid to Cemetery account from Harvest Thanksgiving service. *Swindon Advertiser* 13-11-1876.

The annual Choir outing was held jointly with St. Philip's, last Saturday. About 40 travelled to Marlborough and after lunch spent some time in the forest. *North Wilts Herald* 28-09-1888.

Harvest Festival – annual service held on Wednesday with church elaborately decorated by the ladies of the parish. Across the chancel was an arch of wheat, the sermon was delivered by Rev. Angus MacDonald. Collection raised £1 8s 1½d. Services to continue on Sunday. *North Wilts Herald* 28-09-1888.

WANTED IMMEDIATELY - Infant School Mistress, £60; temporary help accepted; Churchwoman. – Vicar, Stratton. *The Western Daily Press* 29-09-1892.

Great Alarm was caused on Wednesday morning by the information which was given to the Swindon Fire Brigade that the Vicarage at Stratton was in flames. The brigade made for the spot with all speed, when it was discovered that the vicarage was intact, but a thatched cottage within the grounds was on fire. The flames were confined to the cottage and adjoining outbuilding, but there was a delay due to lack of water on the spot. The fire was result of a bonfire in the garden spreading. *Citizen* 27-04-1893.

Easter Vestry – Presided over by vicar, assisted by Rev H R B Morgan. Vote of thanks to Mr Hoddinott for presiding over the churchyard, also special thanks to Mr F Blake. Annual receipts £ 161 4s 3d, expenditure £156 19s 2d, St Phillip's had lost £2 0s 3d. There was then an election of Wardens and sidemen. *Swindon Advertiser* 19-04-1901.

Sunday School treat, 200 children attended a tea at the school and after games and races in the field. *Swindon Advertiser* 06-09-1901.

Harvest Festival held on Thursday & Sunday, both well attended, Thursday was led by Rev F G hunt of Notting Hill *Swindon Advertiser* 27-09-1901.

Donation from church to Victoria Hospital of £10 0s 6d. *Swindon Advertiser* 22-08-1902.

1<sup>st</sup> June 1907 Dr. Forest Brown, Lord Bishop carried out an afternoon confirmation ceremony, there were 45 candidates. The evening service was led by the vicar. *North Wilts Herald* 07-06-1907.

1910 On news of King's death the church raised its flag to half-mast. *Swindon Advertiser* 13-05-1910.

1928 The first lady choristers join the choir. *North Wilts Herald* 13-07-1928 p.13.

St. Margaret's Cricket Club to play Wilts Mental Hospital tomorrow. *North Wilts Herald* 13-07-1928.

Rev. E R Santer took the Remembrance Sunday service with Mr. F A Blake on the organ. *North Wilts Herald* 14-11-1941.

### **Bishop Monk's Horfield Trust & Other Grants.**

1864 it gave £75 towards repairs of parsonage. *Western Daily Press* 27-10-1864, and the following year another £100 was donated, *Western Daily Press* 01-11-1865, and in 1866 a further £100 towards enlarging the vicarage, *Western Daily Press* 07-02-1866. 1868 £120, *The Gloucester Journal* 10/10/1868. £40 in 1873. *The Bristol Mercury* 01-11-1873. £200 in 1875 towards new school *The Western Daily Press* 13-03-1875 and another £20 later in the year, *The Bath Chronicle* 04-11-1875. £40 was given in 1876 towards Curate's stipend *The Gloucester Journal* 05-08-1876. 1877, £40 towards aged or infirm incumbents. *The Bath Chronicle* 9-8-1877. 1878, £40 towards curate's stipend *The Bristol Mercury* 10-08-1878. £60 in 1886 towards Glebe houses, *Citizen* 14-10-1886. £30 grant in 1888 *The Gloucester Journal* 24-03-1888. £60 in 1888 towards curate's stipend & aged and infirm incumbents, *The Gloucester Journal* 13-10-1888. In 1890 it gave £60 in aid of curate's stipend. *The Gloucester Journal* 18-10-1890. £15 in 1896 *The Western Daily Press* 13-03-1896.