

Welcome to St John the Baptist, Tunstall.

Although a church is not mentioned here in the Domesday survey there is good reason to believe that there was one in Saxon days. though of this there is nothing now visible. The Church is dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and old records show that in medieval days there were lights, possibly altars, to St. Margaret of Antioch (who was martyred in 278), and to St. Osyth who with her husband Suthred King of East Anglia was killed by the Danes in 870.



The oldest part of the present building is the Chancel which was rebuilt about 1250. The Nave was rebuilt about 1350 and the north and south aisles were then added, also the tower and a south porch. The South Chancel Chapel was added in the early 15th century and extended to its present size by 1655.

By the early 19th century the fabric was in need of extensive restoration and this was undertaken for the Rector, the Revd. G. Bridges Moore, by the architect Mr. Hussey, during the years 1848 to 1856. In the 1930s the Hales or Lady Chapel south of the Chancel was restored after many years use as a vestry.

The century-old organ was replaced by a sensitively installed electronic organ in 1999?, the eight bells were recast in 1996, considerable work done on the fabric of the church, and an extension built in 1992 which contains meeting room/choir vestry toilets and other much needed facilities.

THE CHANCEL

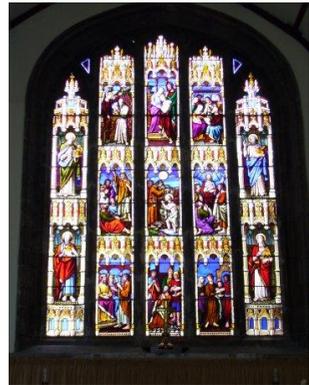


This is built of Caen stone and is the oldest part of the church.

Suspended under the chancel arch is a modern hanging Rood by the artist Martin Travers which was presented in 1968. You can also see a small stone bracket which supported one end of the medieval Rood beam on the north pier of the arch by the pulpit. Along the north wall of the Chancel

are the original 13th century lancet windows.

The east end was also originally pierced with lancets, but about 1510 these were replaced by the present five light window. This was re-glazed in 1851 by Ward and Nixon with scenes from the life of John the Baptist.



In the south wall there also remains a lancet window, now looking into the Hales Chapel, and below it in the wall is a double piscina with cusped arches. The panelling round the Sanctuary was presented in 1936, and the oak stalls date from the Victorian restoration initiated by the Revd. G. Bridges Moore who was here from 1837 to 1885 and whose memorial is in the north wall of the Chancel.

High up on the south wall are two bustos of former rectors; one of the seventeenth and one of the eighteenth century.



The carved bosses in the roof are all of different designs.

THE NAVE

The Nave is simple and dignified, and was rebuilt about 1350 together with the aisles and the tower. The spiral stair in the tower still has its original door, and leads to a peal of eight bells which were re-hung and tuned in 1975, and recast in 1995.

Six of the bells dated from 1843 presumably when earlier ones were recast, and two were presented in 1923. The church has for many years had a keen band of ringers.



The organ was originally under the bell-tower arch, where it was installed by Walker in 1969 to replace a manual instrument by the same maker which was over a hundred years old. This has in turn been replaced by a sensitively installed electronic organ.



The font is modern - part of the Victorian restoration, which also included replacing most of the stonework of the aisle windows, rebuilding and altering the upper part of the tower, rebuilding the porch and re-seating the church. The memorial stained glass in the aisle windows shows good examples of Victorian work, but tends to darken the church.

The pulpit was presented about 1890, and the lectern commemorates Queen Victoria's first Jubilee.



THE SOUTH CHANCEL

This is usually called the Hales or Lady Chapel, and houses the Reserved Sacrament. It has been associated with the Lords of the Manor for over four hundred years. At the beginning of the fifteenth century Reginald, Lord Grey of Ruthin, who owned the Manor, was captured by Owen Glendower and had to sell Tunstall to raise money for his ransom.

The Manor was bought by Sir William Crowmer, Lord Mayor of London in 1413, and some years later a small chapel was built communicating with the chancel by two arches; here the Crowmers were buried. In 1624 the Manor passed from the Crowmer family to the Hales, who enlarged the Chapel eastwards when in 1654 Sir Edward Hales 1st Bart died.



His large memorial is against the south wall. He is shown lying on his side in full armour, a type of effigy popular in the mid seventeenth century. Near the tomb are hung the helmet and gauntlets carried at his funeral.

He had married the widowed Lady Crowmer whose effigy is part of the next memorial, while his son married her youngest daughter.

The remains of the Crowmer monument display what is left of a once elegant Jacobean memorial. It was dismantled at the time of the 19th century restoration, when the chapel became a vestry, and offered to the last of the Hales family for re-erection in the family Chapel at Hales Place, Canterbury.

This was never done, and the pieces were rescued from a builders' yard fifty years later and brought back to Tunstall, where eventually the remains were assembled in the 1930s, when the Hales Chapel was restored.

The figures depict Sir James Crowmer kneeling opposite his wife Martha and below them their three daughters.

The figure of Frances, his daughter by his first marriage, is now missing.





The beautiful alabaster tomb serving as an altar has also suffered from removals in the past. It probably originally stood under the lower of the two arches leading into the Chancel, but the inscription and armorial bearings if ever completed have long since been lost.

High on the north wall are four funeral hatchments of members of the Hales family and others not known.

In the chapel there is also a list of the known Rectors, starting with Lambert de Moneto who died here in 1287. The most famous is Simon de Meopham who became Archbishop of Canterbury 1327.

Notice also the small framed parchment which is a memorial to Sylvester Hartackenden of Ufton Court, who died in 1659 and is buried under the east end of the north aisle.

OTHER FEATURES

Also on view at the west end of the church are hanging rubbings of the only two still intact brasses.

One depicts a lady in late Elizabethan costume who is buried in the Hales Chapel. This is most probably Dame Frances Crowmer, who died three weeks after childbirth in 1597, and was the first wife of Sir James mentioned above.

The other brass is of the parish priest Ralph Wulf, who died in 1525 and is buried in the Chancel.

The position of the east window, which is not in the centre of the wall, causes comment. While this may be due to miscalculation, it is possible that it may be deliberate to make the window centre with the tower and chancel arches, the Nave and Chancel not being in exact alignment. A church in Sussex has a similar eccentricity. An alternative suggestion is that problems were encountered when the original lancets were replaced in 1510. The parish registers are complete from 1539.

The war memorial, was until recently in the blocked north doorway, which was re-opened when the extension was built. Over this doorway notice the Victorian replacement of the Royal Arms presented in 1708. When leaving observe the stone door case in the porch, which is of elegant 14th century design, with the hood mould terminating in carvings of crowned heads.



The massive door studded with nails and with its medieval strap work is also original, and is unusual in that it is pierced by two grills closed by a shutter. The purpose of this is not certain, but was possibly for ventilation when the church was locked. Outside the porch door a few feet to the west is the table tomb of a priest, with a cross patonce carved on the eastern end. This is believed to be dated about 1500, and it is

of interest that there are similar tombs in this position in Borden and Bredgar.

The clock in the tower was presented by the donor of the bells mentioned earlier in 1913. It was completely overhauled in 1975. The west doorway of the church under the tower has a fourteenth century ogee arch with crockets, and originally with a foliated finial.

In the churchyard on the north side of the church is an ancient yew, estimated to be about 1000 years old, and close by among other trees planted in 1865 is a Wellingtonia. From the outside it is easy to see the extension of the Hales Chapel as this is in brick. Above its east window is a stone plaque with the initials and date, E.H. 1655, and the arms of the Hales family

Windows in Tunstall Church



The presentation of Christ

Luke 2:32

“a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.”

Simeon’s prayer is used in the Evening
Service and is called the Nunc Dimmitis.

The Baptism of Jesus

Mark 1: 9-11

Left - “In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

Right - Peter baptising Cornelius after Jesus’ ascension.

Acts 10:25,26 – “On Peter’s arrival Cornelius met him, and falling at his feet, worshipped him. But Peter made him get up, saying, “Stand up; I am only a mortal.”





The Crucifixion

John 19:17-18

“So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.

There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.”

The Old Testament

Left Jacob greeting Joseph

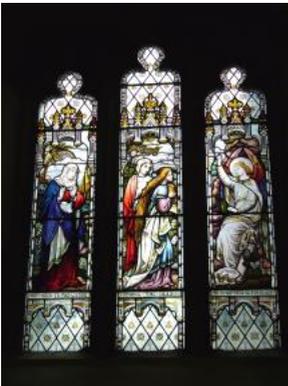
Genesis 45:28 - “Jacob said, “Enough! My son Joseph is still alive. I must go and see him before I die.”

Centre Elisha and Elijah

2 Kings 2:11 - “As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven.”

Right Ruth and Naomi

Ruth 1:16 - Where you go, I will go”



The Resurrection

Luke 24:5 - The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.



Elijah

Malachi 4:5 “. Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.



Isaiah

Isaiah 40:3, 5
“Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
A voice cries out: "In the
wilderness prepare the way of
the Lord, make straight in the
desert a highway for our God.



John the Baptist

Luke 1:57 – “Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son.”

Matthew 3:13 – “Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him.”

Mark 6:27 – “Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison.”

The Emmaus Road

Luke 24:13 – “Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem”

Luke 24:31 – “Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.”



Jesus' Teaching

Matthew 6:28 – “And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin.”

John 10:14 – “I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.”

Resurrection Appearances

Left - Jesus on the Sea of Galilee.

John 21:4 – “Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.”

Right – The woman touching the hem of Jesus' robe.

Luke 8:47 – “Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed”.



The Font

For anyone to become a member of the Church he or she has to be baptised into Christ and made one of his family. The font is the place of baptism. This basic tenet of faith is paralleled in the location of the font. When someone comes into the Church, he or she has to physically pass the font to enter the rest of the place where the family of Christ meet to worship.

The Altar

The Altar represents the body of Christ. Some priests will kiss the altar as a sign of devotion to the Lord. The great meal of thanksgiving, variously called the Eucharist, Holy Communion, Mass and other names, is celebrated weekly here and is prepared on the Altar. The Altar is located in the area of the Church called the Sanctuary, and is usually entered by the Priests and their helpers who are called Servers.

The Nave

The Nave is the place of the people. In Medieval times, the Nave was the area of the community building that is the Church, for trading to take place, for political and social meetings. Pews are a comparatively new addition to Churches from the Reformation and after the sixteenth century. Before then the Nave was an open space.

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