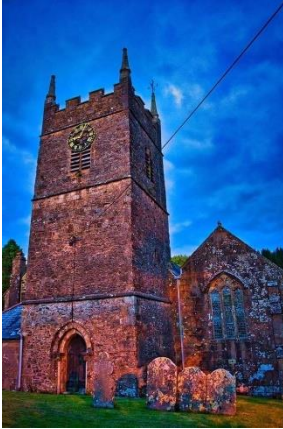


ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY, NORTHLEW



Rob Woolley

It is likely that there has been a church in Northlew since the 11th century. The earliest church would have occupied about the same area as the current tower, and it is probable that the tower is built over the site of that earlier church.

The building that we see today largely dates to the 15th century, although the tower and the West doorway are older – perhaps 12th century.

The carved pew ends are Tudor. Some show the arms of prominent families and others depict the story of the Cross and Passion. Look for: St. Peter's sword; the crown of thorns; the nails; the ladder and the vessel set with vinegar. A further set of pew ends tell of the martyr St. Thomas of Canterbury (Thomas a Beckett) to whom the church is dedicated.

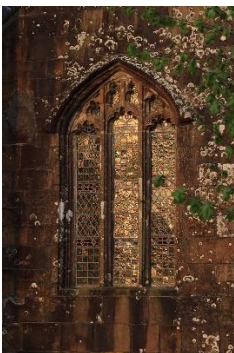
This set features: a mitred head, the hair shirt and the cup of martyrdom. The Rood Screen, separating the chancel from the nave is a particularly impressive feature. It is however, a relatively recent restoration. The 'old' screen was defaced and broken at the time of the reformation but was restored, in sections, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The particularly fine Rood Cross sits on top of the screen and looks down on the central aisle of the church.



Liz Mary

The font is probably Norman in origin; it was removed at the time of the English Civil War and lay in the churchyard until 1870 when it was repaired and re-installed.

The tower houses a peal of six bells. The earliest bell bears an inscription dating it to 1772, and the sixth bell is ominously inscribed "I to the church the living call and to the grave I summon all"



Amy Gilbert

There are many other features of local interest in the church making it well worth a visit. However, an old church needs continual repair. The funding of the maintenance of the church building, its fabric and the churchyard is the responsibility of 'The Friends of St Thomas Church' (FOST). If you wish to find out more about FOST, or indeed to become a member of FOST, please contact Jackie Ellis (secretary) on 01837 658750.