

SAINT ANDREW'S CHURCH. HEMPSTEAD.

Hempstead is one of several very attractive villages in this corner of Essex. It is studded with picturesque houses and cottages and its beauty is enhanced by some notable trees. The notorious highwayman, Dick Turpin, was born at the local inn and was baptised at the church here in September 1705. Hempstead was known as 'Hamesteda' in the Domesday Book and it is suggested that the name indicates a homestead, or that the 'Hemp' prefix either refers to the plant of that name, or means a high place. The church does have a commanding position above the village, its bold western tower standing like a sentinel.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHURCH.

We know that the nave and aisles of this church were consecrated by Simon of Sudbury, in 1365, when he was Bishop of London and the oldest parts of the building date probably from the years just before this consecration. It was built as a Chapel of Ease to the parish church of Great Sampford and was not a parish church in its own right. Simon of Sudbury however, through an error, consecrated the church-yard here, to which only parish churches were entitled. Thus Hempstead church must be unique in having enjoyed the privileges of a parish church whilst being only a chapel of ease from 1365 until April 1977, when the present parish of Hempstead with Radwinter came into being.

The architecture of the first half of the 14th century can be seen in the nave arcades and in the (renewed) aisle windows. The chancel windows show the Perpendicular architecture of the 15th century and the east end was rebuilt in Tudor brick during the early 16th century. The chancel is now quite short and was almost certainly longer before the brick remodelling of the east end. In the 17th century, the north chapel and vestry were erected over the Harvey vault.

The church remained structurally unaltered until great misfortune struck in 1882, when the tower collapsed due, it is thought, to weakness and decay in the south-east buttress and in the staircase turret, also on the south side, which was cracked and warped. Photographs taken at the time show that the tower, which fell southwards, was reduced to a heap of rubble and that parts of the nave

In the centre of the chapel is a large sarcophagus, made from a single block of Carrara marble, containing the remains of Dr. William Harvey, which were placed here by the Royal College of Physicians in 1883.

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The tower contains a peal of six bells. There were five in the old tower, but the tenor (cast by Stephen Tonne, of Bury St. Edmunds, in 1575) was damaged and was recast into two bells. Its inscription is preserved in the church. The other four bells survived. They were cast by Anthony Bartlet (1664), Thomas Gardiner (1751), John Tonne (16th century) and Christopher Hodson (1678).

Amongst the church plate is an Elizabethan chalice, made in 1561 and a bowl with two handles, made in 1630 for some secular use.

The registers for Baptisms and Marriages date from 1664, and Burials from 1665.

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We welcome you to this ancient House of God and we hope that these brief notes have helped to show you some of its treasures. The people of this small village are justly proud of their church and use it regularly for worship. It is not just an ancient monument, but is the meeting-place for the living Church in Hempstead. This is why generations of people from the 14th century to the present day have tended it and beautified it. Please help those who gladly care for it today to maintain it for the glory of God and for future generations to use and enjoy. Please pray for the priest and people here, who would be very grateful for any contribution that you can spare towards keeping this church intact and beautiful.

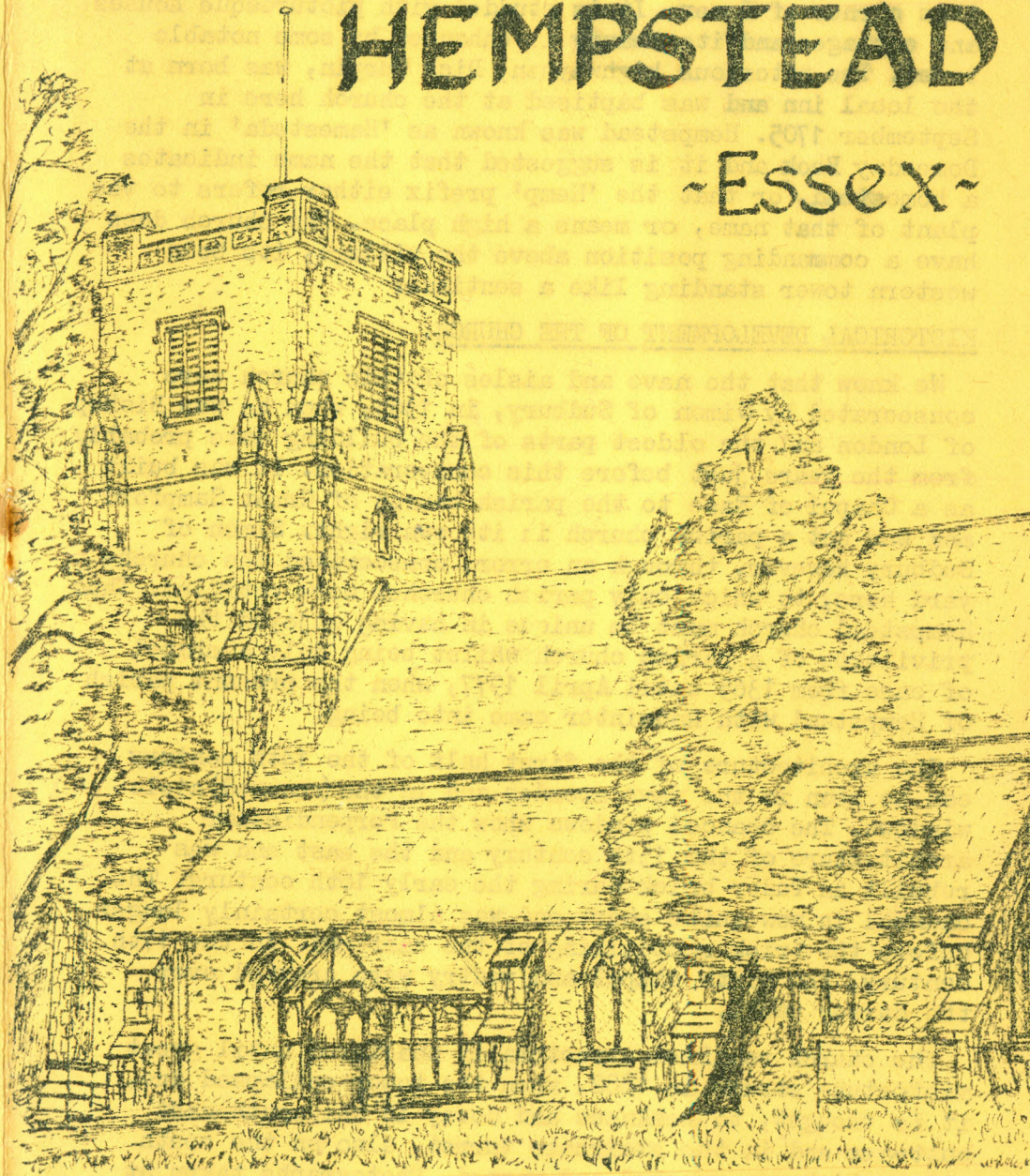
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This guide has been written, on behalf of the Essex Churches Support Trust, by Roy Tricker, who is grateful for valuable help and advice given by the Rector and Churchwarden of this church.

St. Andrew's Church

HEMPSTEAD

-Essex-



Brief Guide

In the centre of the church is a large window, made from a single block of German marble, containing the remains of St. Andrew Harvey, which were placed here by the Royal College of Physicians in 1663.

The tower contains a bell of six bells. There were five in the old tower, but the tower (built by Stephen Tounce, of Bayly St. Edmunds, in 1375) was damaged and was rebuilt into the tower. The inscription is preserved in the church. The other four bells destroyed. They were cast by Andrew Gifford (1666), Thomas Gifford (1751), John Tounce (18th century), and Andrew Gifford (1813).

Around the church plate is an Elizabethan silver, made in 1561 and a bowl with two handles, made in 1635 for use as a communion cup.

The vestments for baptism and marriage date from 1664, and medals from 1665.

We welcome you to this ancient house of God and we hope that these brief notes have helped to show you some of its treasures. The people of this parish are justly proud of their church and we do not regretly for ourselves. It is not just an ancient monument, but in the great places for the living church in Hempstead. This is the generation of people from the 15th century when the present day church was founded. It was built by the monks of Bayly St. Edmunds, and it is today a witness to the glory of God and the human endeavour to see and enjoy. Please pray for the church and people here, and we would be very grateful for any contributions that you can spare towards keeping this church happy and beautiful.

This guide has been written, on behalf of the Rector, Charles Robert Lewis, by Rev. Richard, who is grateful for valuable help and advice given by the Rector and the members of the church.

2. Matrices of another couple, with their childrens' indents beneath them.
3. Smaller brasses of a civilian and his wife. c. 1475.
4. Matrix of inscription.
5. Inscription to Richard Westley and Jone his wife. 1518.
6. Effigy of a civilian, c. 1480. Matrices of his wife and children.
7. Effigies of a civilian (with gypciere on his belt) and his wife (c.1530). Two rectangular plates beneath them show their children. The inscription is missing.

Beneath the entrance arch to the chapel from the north aisle is the fine brass to Thomas Huntingdon and his wife, Margaret. He died in 1492 and is dressed in armour. The four shields remain at the corners but the inscription is missing.

There are several wall monuments to members of the Harvey family. At the east end of the north aisle is commemorated their most famous member, Dr. William Harvey, chief Physician to King Charles I, who discovered the circulation of the blood. His bust here is said to be a very good likeness of him. It is by Edward Marshall.

The Harvey monuments in their chapel are as follows:-

West wall - 1. Sir Eliab Harvey, Admiral and M.P., whose hatchment hangs in the north aisle. He died in 1830 and his son, William, is also commemorated here.

2. Lady Louisa Harvey, his widow (died 1481) and four of her children who died during her lifetime.

East wall - 1. A huge (10 X 6 feet) marble monument, giving names and details of the members of the family buried in the vault. It begins with Sir Eliab Harvey, a London merchant, who died in 1661 and mentions his children, their wives and some of his grandchildren.

2. William Harvey of Roehampton (1719) and Bridget, his wife (1701). A recess containing a huge circular marble plinth, surmounted by an urn. Above is a coat of arms, decorated with garlands of flowers.

3. William Harvey of Chigwell and of Winchlow Hall, Hempstead (1742). A noteworthy monument in grey and white marble, with drape-shaded medallions. It is by Roubiliac and was erected in 1758 by Mary Harvey, who was later commemorated on it.

were badly damaged by the fall. The old tower showed work of 15th century date and was a noble structure with two-light belfry windows. The staircase turret reached to the level of the embattled parapet, upon which hung a small bell. A photograph taken shortly after the collapse shows that the nave had a plaster ceiling, strengthened by tie-beams, and some of the old box-pews remained.

In 1887. there was a thorough restoration of the church, when it was made usable for worship again and was reopened in May 1888. The outer walls of the aisles and their windows were rebuilt and the present porch was erected and the tower and chancel arches were also rebuilt. The work of rebuilding the tower did not commence until 1933, although some of the stonework had been carefully stored in the Harvey Vault and four bells which had survived were hung in the churchyard. The cost of rebuilding was met by the William Harvey Memorial Fund and the Harvey Society. Work stopped in 1934, after two-thirds of the tower was built, for want of £1,000, and started again in 1959 when completion cost £14,000! The tower was dedicated by the Bishop of Colchester in 1962 and in the following year it won a Civic Trust Award.

EXTERIOR.

There are several interesting features in the exterior of this church and a walk around it is worthwhile.

The tower, although almost new, is distinctive and of noble proportions, which are greatly enhanced by the gabled angle buttresses supporting it at the corners. Some original carved mediaeval stonework can be seen in the west doorway, which is flanked by large corbel-heads, and in the stone shields near the base. The handsome west window is built in the Decorated (early 14th century) style of architecture, and has reticulated (net-like) tracery. By contrast, the belfry windows are simple rectangular apertures, with louvre openings made of perspex.

The windows of the aisles date from 1887, but are in the style of the mid 14th century.

The chancel has two square-headed 15th century windows, west of which is a tall single window. This may once have been a 'low-side' window with an aperture in its lower half for the ringing of an external bell at certain parts of the Mass in mediaeval times. The colourful Tudor brick east end has a three-light east window. Of brick also is the north chapel and vestry, with original windows and door. Beneath

is the vault of the Harveys, and a careful look through the grating will reveal a glimpse of the lead coffins inside.

The simple 19th century porch incorporates, near its inner entrance, mediaeval carved spandrels, with shields. This woodwork is probably part of the original porch.

INTERIOR.

The aisles are separated from the nave by fine 14th century arcades of four bays, resting on quatrefoil piers with moulded capitals and bases. Above the arches is a continuous dripstone, resting upon four corbel-heads and modern blocks where the others once were.

The font, which may also date from the early 14th century (although some believe it to be of Norman origin) has a square bowl, with chamfered corners, resting upon a large circular central shaft, with four smaller corner shafts.

On the north aisle wall hang the framed Royal Arms of King George IV, also the funeral hatchment of Admiral Sir Eliab Harvey, who died in 1830. He was M.P. for 21 years and commanded the 'Fighting Temeraire' - the supporting ship to Nelson's 'Victory' at the Battle of Trafalgar. This hatchment was damaged when the tower fell, but was beautifully restored by Sir Francis Whitmore in 1958.

Most of the furnishings of the church date from 1887. The pulpit and lectern were carved by the Rev'd J. Escreet, who was Curate here from 1887-95 and who also carved some of the woodwork in the porch.

In the south wall of the south aisle chapel is a pretty 14th century piscina, indicating that an altar stood here in mediaeval times. Notice also in this aisle the framed photograph of the church and the fine wooden model of the building with its original tower. On the west windowsill is a fragment of the old tenor bell, with its inscription.

The roofs of the nave and aisles date from 1887, but the framework of the chancel roof is mediaeval.

In the south wall of the sanctuary are two niches of 15th century date, which were probably both built for piscinas. Maybe one was to be used for washing the sacred vessels and the other for washing the priest's hands during the Mass. On the north side of the sanctuary is a seat which incorporates two mediaeval bench-ends, with carved tops in the

form of leaves and with two heads for armrests.

The focal point of the church is the High Altar. This is not ancient but, by contrast, is a very worthy 20th century contribution to the interior. The altar itself was given to the church in 1977 by Mr. W.G. Freeman. Its furnishings are extremely tasteful and the modern frontal adds a blaze of colour to the sanctuary and enhances the beauty of the church.

A door which is at least 400 years old leads to the 17th century vestry, which is worth a visit. Here can be seen the church's 16th century oak chest, which has three locks (doubtless one for the priest and one for each churchwarden so that all three had to be present for it to be opened). Notice also the 19th century photographs of the church, taken before and after the collapse of the tower.

The north chapel contains many of the church's interesting monuments (described later). It has its original 17th century floor of panments and beneath it is the Harvey vault, which contains some thirteen lead coffins of members of the Harvey family. These are of interest and are considered to be unique, because they are cast in the rough shape of human beings, the faces of which are believed to be in the likeness of their occupants when living.

MONUMENTS.

The church is rich in memorials to people of the past who have been associated with it. The oldest of these can be seen in the floors of the nave and chancel.

In the centre of the chancel is a large stone slab, of about 1300, around the edge of which is a French inscription in Lombardic letters, which reads: "Dame Margerie de Basinge gist ici dieu desa alme eit merci. Amen". (Dame Margorie de Basing lies here. May God have mercy upon her soul.)

There are several brasses, also the matrices of others which are now lost. Those in the nave gangway, from west to east, are as follows:-

1. Nicely preserved effigy of a civilian, and beneath him are his ten sons. His wife and daughters are missing. This dates from c. 1518 and commemorates William and Ann Mordaunt. He was chief Prothonotary of the Court of Common Pleas.