



Welcome to All Saints church at Boughton Aluph. There has been a church on this site at least since Saxon times, when it would have been of wooden construction. The stone and flint building you see now was started by Alulphus of Boctune around 1210, when he built the north chapel. The chancel and nave were added in stages and completed by the middle of the following century.

From the north door, which you have just entered, turn left and you will see the holy water stoup, a sort of finger basin for purification, set in the wall recess by the doorway.



As you walk towards the altar (east) you come to the fine window in the shallow north transept. Although partly obscured by the organ you can make out the re-set armorial glass - shields of arms set high in the tracery of the window-head. Thomas de Aledon was responsible for increasing the size of the church in the mid 14th C. and these shields commemorate his friends and neighbours who contributed to the cost.

The organ itself was a gift to the parish by Canterbury Diocese on the closure of the church of St John the Evangelist in Brents, Faversham. Originally built in 1905 by J W Walker & Sons it was dismantled and re-built here in 2004 by F H Browne & Sons of Stourmouth near Canterbury.

On the right you face a fresco painting of a seated, haloed and bearded figure (probably God the Father, and part of a representation of the Holy Trinity) dating to about 1440. Ever since the reformation, probably, it lay hidden behind a memorial to Capt. Robert Moyle, which unfortunately broke in 1893 when being removed (and which is now in the South transept).



In the wall, around the corner behind the Trinity fresco in the north chancel, in the so-called Moyle Chapel, is a fine, but rather carelessly erected marble tomb to Amye Clarke (née Moyle, who died in 1631) with a typically pompous period inscription in English and Latin. Next you come to a finely carved, probably C14 screen. It is thought this may have been moved from the chancel archway, or even from Eastwell church which sadly is now a ruin. Above, over the Moyle Chapel, which is now used as a vestry, can be seen the tie-beam and collar-truss roof of this, the earliest substantial part of the church, dating from the late 13th Century.

To the right, in front of the carved screen and high on the wall you see a plaque, similar in style to Amye Clarke's, commemorating the life of Sir Robert Moyle, son of Capt Robert Moyle. Given that he died aged only 25 he must have packed in many good works to earn the eulogy inscribed!



Because under the chancel arch, facing the altar, and note the unusual step down into the chancel. There would normally be a step up here but it is thought the sloping site gave the designer of the nave little choice. Study the early C14 surviving features:

the priest's seat (sedilia) and adjacent piscina (used for rinsing the chalice, with its own drain hole to keep the water separate) set within a carved hood and canopy. Nearby, on the east wall is an elegant moulded bracket, probably a stand for an oil-lamp or a large candle. Some say the carved head is that of the Fair Maid of Kent, wife of the Black Prince. Separating the chancel from the Moyle Chapel are three round columns, each with a differently carved capital, put in place when the present chancel was added to the original building in the early 14th Century. The nave and transepts were added in the third phase of building, in the middle of the 14th Century.



In each side of the great east window and on the south wall of the chancel can be seen traces of the jambs of the original tall, narrow lancet windows, replaced in the mid-C14 building of the nave, or perhaps later. The one beside the pulpit had to be blocked because the stair turret to the impressive new tower was built in the angle outside. The medieval glass in the east window is very fine. Along with nine other windows in the church, a major renovation project was undertaken in 2009/10 involving repairs, cleaning and improved conservation. Several figures can be made out, including St Christopher holding the Christ child. For decades the figures in the centre were thought to represent Edward III and Queen Philippa, but recent research suggests they are more likely to be of Christ and the Virgin Mary, representing the Coronation of the Virgin.



Thomas de Aledon (Lord of the Manor 1329, died 1361) was undoubtedly responsible for all or much of this very ambitious scheme of rebuilding. Eventually the chancel too would have been rebuilt but loss of population, financial resources and labour caused by the Black Death intervened with the result that the very interesting late C13 eastern end survived, and for this we must be very thankful. Continuing round, past the mid-C17 pedestal pulpit, built of softwood and with modern Gothic panels, you pass the tower door, which is believed to be over 600 years old. And above it is the memorial to Capt Robert Moyle, now skilfully repaired and surprisingly complete after perhaps 100 years in pieces on the Moyle chapel floor!



You now face the wonderful south transept window which having been destroyed and bricked-up thanks to a stray World War II firebomb, remained like that until the friends and management of the Stour Music Festival (annually in June, here) generously offered to re-instate it in 2010 in memory of founder Alfred Deller. The resulting, inspiring design by Léonie Seliger (see separate description in the church) has transformed this part of the building, providing an extraordinary sense of light and space, which is one of the great glories of All Saints.

From this point the superb quality of the cut-stone masonry (ashlar) can be appreciated. The great central-crossing tower is an inspired work of vision. Four slender and elegant octagonal pillars, seemingly without effort carry that vast mass of masonry, with its chamber above and bell-storey over it. The thrust generated is so effectively buttressed by the aisle arches and adjacent walls that the four columns are barely thicker than those of the nave, preserving the unity of aspect. Nothing has shifted, despite the perils of the centuries.



Moving down towards the great west door you pass the recently opened doorway to the south porch with its Tudor-style fireplace. Whether the fireplace, set in the diminutive room, was intended to warm pilgrims on the Canterbury road is not clear; it seems rather late in date for that, but it forms a unique feature and is still used occasionally to comfort cold (and sometimes wet!) pilgrim groups on their way north. Above the south door is a very fine George II Royal Coat of Arms dated 1751 with the names of the then churchwardens. Rather dark to study in detail despite recent cleaning, it is nevertheless an excellent reminder of the monarch's historic role as Head of the Church of England. The fine stone font is probably Victorian.

The stained glass in the west window was re-worked using medieval glass from windows destroyed during the Civil War.



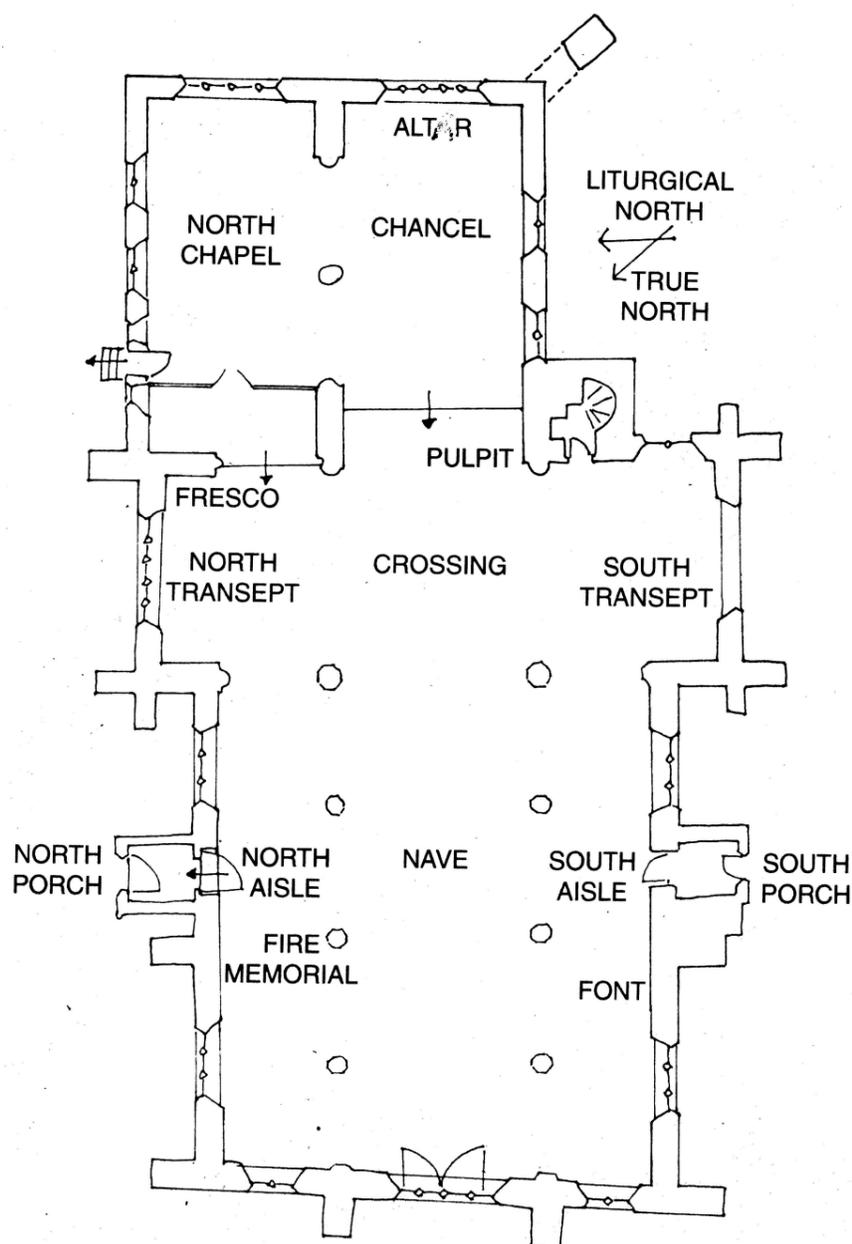
Two memorials adorn the north wall. One, beautifully carved by Canterbury stonemason Gary Newton in Caithness limestone, commemorates all those village servicemen who lost their lives in both World Wars, and was erected in 2018 to mark the centenary of the end of WW1. Further along, another commemorates the gallant efforts of the Wye Fire Service who bravely fought the fire in the tower during WW2, and without whose courage the church would surely have been destroyed. It was commissioned in 1990, designed by John Ward RA of Bilting, and made by Michael Rust of Hastingleigh.



Thus you come back to the north door which has recently been cleaned and renovated and is of very unusual construction. It is thought to be contemporary with the building of the nave (1329-1361). The outer door, a beautifully fashioned gift in oak from a tree on Richard Beaugié's farm and made by him, was designed to match the South door and replace some inappropriate pine.

We hope you have enjoyed looking round our lovely old church. If you would like a permanent record of your visit please take a copy of the church's history, for which a donation of £1 would be appreciated. There is a box for this beside the nearby pillar.

Donations are always welcome, of course, and can be made in cash in the same box or online at: www.allsaintsba.org.uk



A Tour of the Exterior

When you leave the church, take time to walk around the exterior – doing so helps to make intelligible the various features of the interior architecture. The north porch itself is an addition of c.1820 as is the rough but remarkably sympathetic brick tracery and mullions, inserted into the two north aisle windows. The specially moulded bricks are carefully made and reproduce the spirit of the 14th C. style of the originals.

Walking clockwise round the church from the north porch, past the great window of the north transept with its well-preserved tracery and armorial shields you come to the north wall of the Moyle Chapel. This is the oldest part of the church. Flanking the small doorway (see how constant burials and natural humus build-up have raised the outside ground level) are two narrow lancet windows, severe and elegant. On the north-east quoin or angle stone, note the modern Ordnance Survey level mark.

Viewing the two very grand east windows shows that the right hand one has been modified by raising the sill to match the other. Traces of the earlier mullion bases can be seen. Both have been altered several times but the overall effect is still mid-14th C. in character. The left hand window is off-centre, the result undoubtedly of being inserted in place of the original lancets, of which we noted evidence inside the chancel.

On the south-east angle, the massive 19th C. brick buttress with reworked ashlar arch-stones has successfully defeated subsidence.

The substantial stair turret of the central tower is best viewed from the south-east. Few churches possess stair turrets as large as this, or as well made.

As you move further round you can appreciate the splendid new tracery of the south transept window, matching the rose design of its north transept counterpart.

Next comes the incongruous, but rather charming, brick south porch. Completing the circuit, admire the splendid west front, where replaced stonework has been sensitively incorporated and the central window, above the grand doorway, has its graceful and sinuous original tracery in quite good condition.

As you leave the churchyard, look back at that grand tower (over 30 feet square on plan at the summit) straddling the junction of the roofs and dominating the countryside. It is indeed a crowning achievement.

All Saints has suffered much over the centuries (most recently from the hurricane in October 1987) but has won itself many devoted friends.