

This characterful church is a rebuild of a Romanesque church between 1847 and 1851. At that time the Rector, Canon F.W. Fowle employed a curate named William Grey; it appears to have been his inspiration to rebuild the old church, almost entirely as it had been before. A picture in the nave shows the earlier church and there are only minor differences. Grey was one of those gentleman-priest-architects who emerged in the nineteenth century; he worked on nearly a dozen churches both in England and in Canada. Fowle helped finance the rebuilding and there is a memorial to him in the chancel. An earlier incumbent was his kinsman Thomas Fowle (d. 1806) who was engaged to Cassandra, sister of Jane Austen. Unfortunately, he died in the West Indies trying to earn enough money to marry her.

## Exterior

The church is built of local flint with limestone dressings and incorporates masonry from the original church. The decorative chequerboard pattern on the external walls is common in this part of Wiltshire. The water spewers on the south face of the tower come from the old church and represent devils with their cheeks puffed up to expel the water! On the north side of the church are the remains of what was once a fine Norman arch, probably a doorway, with pellet and lozenge decoration. To its right and lower down is a mass dial. This would have been carved on the south side of the church to indicate the times of service. On the corner of the tower, by the path and at low level, may be found a large collection of graffiti. It is obvious that these two squared blocks of stone were once higher and the other way up: at just the right height for people to leave their marks!

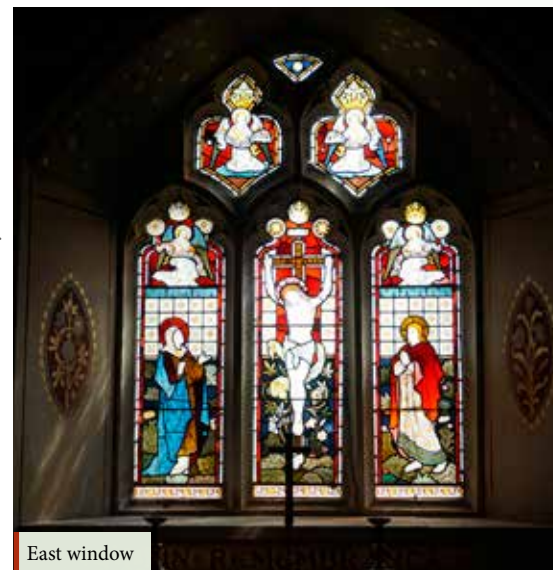


The stencilled decoration in the chancel was a memorial to Canon Fowle. It is by Heaton, Butler and Bayne and the most interesting part is the fictive curtain on the back of the sedile (seat for the priest). Above it is an orange tree. The chancel floor is more elaborate than the nave, indicating, together with the wall decorations, the greater importance of this end of the building in the Victorian period. The east window, also by Heaton, Butler and Bayne, shows the Crucifixion. The splay of the window is painted with stars, creating a form of celure, or canopy of honour, to the main altar.

## Interior

It's thought that the font is a replica of the early thirteenth-century original which, according to records, is buried beneath it. The cover appears to comprise medieval woodwork, but its superstructure with three carved heads on the finial is Victorian. Opposite the main door is the Creed, part of a set including the Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments that once would have been displayed on either side of the altar.

The chancel arch uses the original Norman pellet moulding for its impost, but instead of the original round headed arch, this Victorian one is firmly carved in the thirteenth century style, with a pointed top.

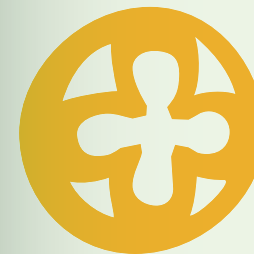


East window



Painted decoration in the sedile





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*Church of St John the Baptist*  
**Allington**

**a guide to its history**

## Not far from Allington

### St Mary's, Long Crichel, Dorset

This church is both peculiar and picturesque. Set in to the chalkland of the Cranborne Chase, the design combines a late medieval tower with a nave, transept and apse built in stages between 1852 and 1875 (contact office for keyholder).



### St Mary's, Temple Corsley, Wiltshire

Anglican private chapel commissioned by Mrs Mary Barton in memory of her son and husband. Built in 1902 by W.H. Stanley of Trowbridge. A doll-like, Arts and Crafts Gothic chapel, set in a chocolate-box English village (open daily).

