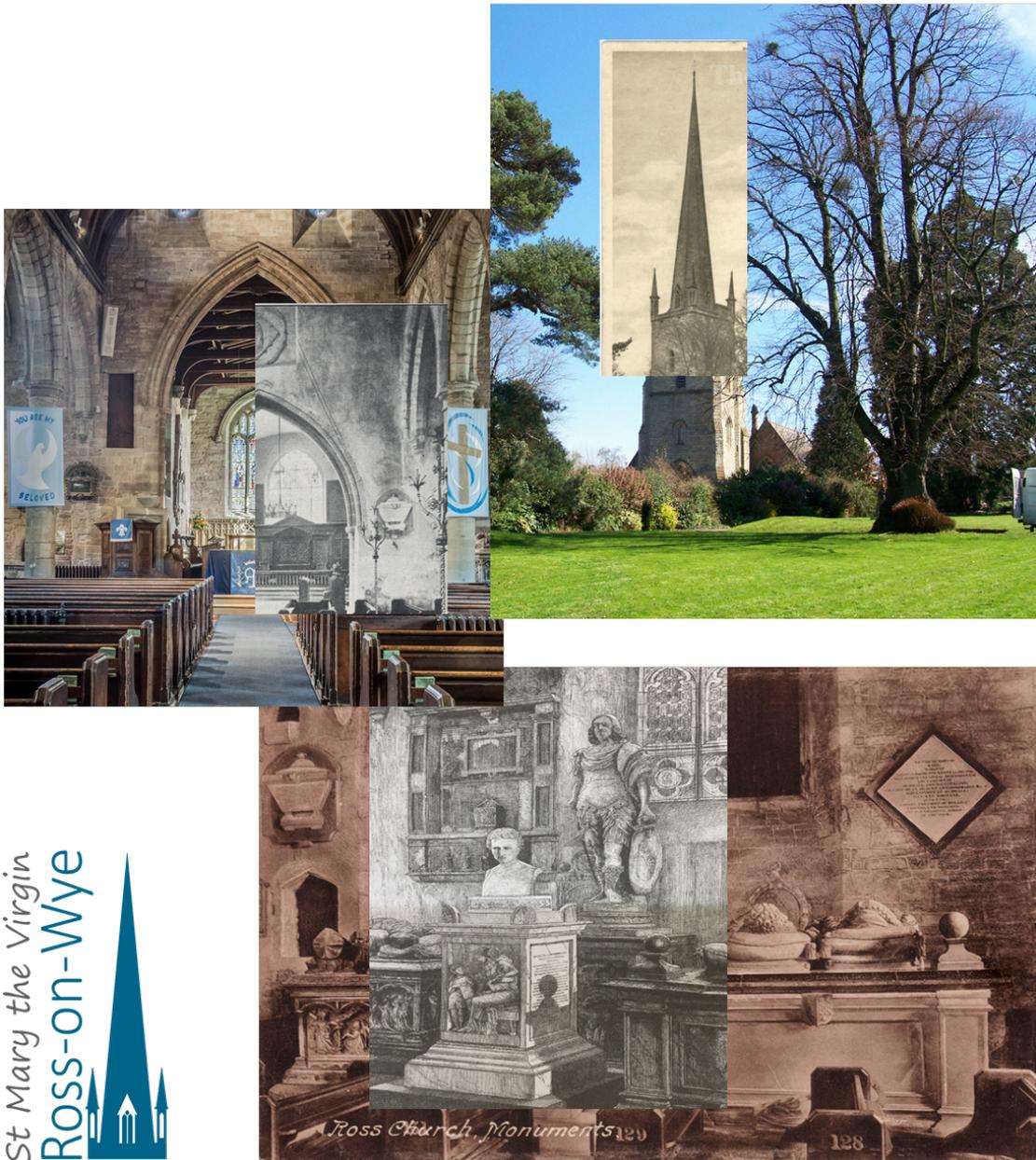


# A History of the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Ross-on Wye

by Revd John Tarrant, Mark Sanderson and others



St Mary the Virgin  
ROSS-ON-WYE





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Compiled by the Revd John Tarrant, Mark Sanderson (and others) **Last updated March 2026**

This guide has been compiled and is regularly updated using a range of sources, in particular:

- Church guidebooks – 1930, compiled by The Revd. EH Beattie (Rector) and 1981
- records found in the “Rectory Box” now in the Herefordshire County Archive, (HARC)
- “Collections towards the History and Antiquities of the County of Hereford” - John Duncumb / William Henry Cook (1882)
- An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Herefordshire, Volume 2, East. Originally published by His Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1932.
- Various editions of Thomas Dudley Fosbroke’s Companion to the Wye Tour ... (early 19<sup>th</sup> century) which can be found on Google Books
- The Wye Tour by JA Stratford (editor of the Ross Gazette) 1896
- The 1675 Thomas Blount Manuscript History of Herefordshire
- Silas Taylor’s 1658 History of Herefordshire

We have attempted to give an accurate account of the development of the building. Sources have been quoted where appropriate / known.

The printed copy of the guide is intended to act as a reference point for those visiting the church. It can also be found (probably in a more recent edition) on the Ross parishes Website: <https://rossparishes.uk/ross>

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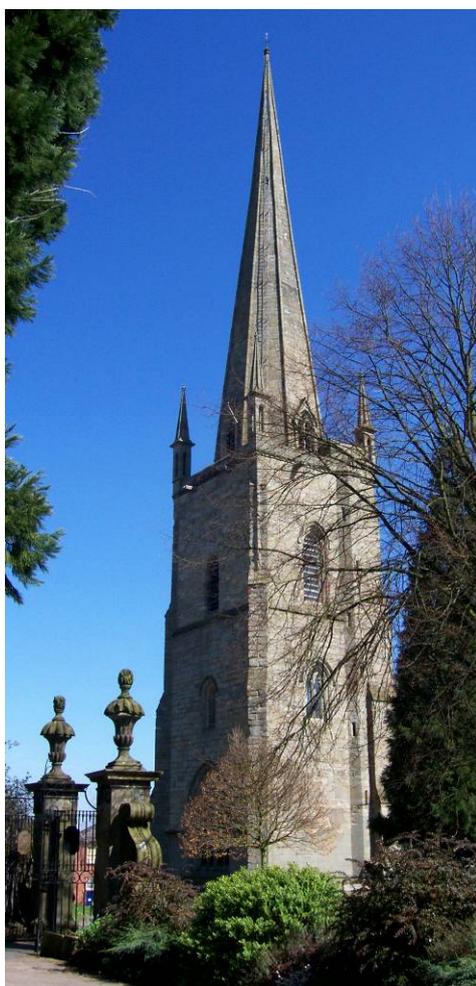
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# 1. The Church

## General Background

The Church stands on the promontory that is said to give Ross its name, Rhos being the Welsh word for a promontory or headland. The spire reaches up over two hundred feet above ground level and looks most impressive from many vantage points in Ross, from across the Wye, and from miles around.



The spire (the tallest in Herefordshire) rises from a tower attached to the west end of the main body of the church, which has always consisted of a nave with an aisle on either side, all much the same size and each with a pitched roof to match. At the east end of the nave is a long chancel, and to the south have been added at different times a porch and then another chapel. The most recent addition is the organ chamber which extends the south aisle alongside part of the sanctuary.

The church is not quite built on the traditional east / west orientation, a priest standing in front of the high altar would be facing east-north-east.

Coming into the church by the north porch, one enters a building which is in many ways typical of an English parish church of its size and age. You can see that it is the loved home of a fairly normal congregation. Some of the books in use are new, while others are well-worn. All over the church there are signs of present activity and of recent developments. There are odd traces of ways of worship that have been important over the centuries, and of the people who have formed the church. John

Kyrle is just one of a surprising number who are significant enough to have entries in the Dictionary of National Biography.

The church celebrated its seventh centenary in 1984 (though no evidence has been found of a build date of 1284) and most of the building looks as though it dates from about 1300. There have been frequent major repairs and reconstructions, particularly of the spire, and the interior was much altered and took roughly its present shape in the 1860s and 1870s. Though many of the features of the church will be familiar to churchgoers, the columns of the nave and the vine growing in the south aisle are most unusual. St Mary's is also rich in stories.

## St Mary the Virgin

As the mother of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary had a unique place in his life from his beginning to the beginning of the Church. It was she who gave birth to Our Lord in Bethlehem, and it was she who raised him in Nazareth. She was there at the foot of the cross when he died for us, and she was there in Jerusalem to share the excitement of the resurrection. Over the centuries Christians have come to reflect on the significance of her choice by God to be the mother of our saviour, and on her importance to him. Devotion to Our Lady was particularly strong in the England of the Middle Ages, and many churches had Lady Chapels attached in her honour. In quite a number of places, as here, whole church was dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin. There is some evidence that the original dedication was to "The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary".

## Ross-on-Wye

Rhos is the Welsh word for promontory or headland, and it is widely believed that the promontory on which the church stands above the Wye gave its name to the town. It is also true that the headland consists of a rose-coloured sandstone, and that in the Middle Ages the symbol of the town was a sprig of rosemary. It has been argued that Ross took its name from the colour, but few have been convinced of this. The change from 'Ross' to 'Ross-on-Wye' was made in 1931.

## Hereford

There has been a Bishop of Hereford since 676, when a Bishop of Rochester took refuge there. Much of this area seems to have been continuously Christian since late Roman times, and when Hereford established its authority over Ross is not known. By the 12th century the Bishop of Hereford had a palace in Ross, on the site of what is now the Royal Hotel.

## Diocese, Deanery and Benefice

These days the diocese of Hereford covers Herefordshire and South Shropshire. Ross is the largest town in the Deanery of Ross and Archenfield. Today, the parish Ross-on-Wye is partnered with those Michael of neighbouring St and All Angels, Walford and St Michael and All Angels Brampton Abbots. The Rector of Ross is also responsible for the Benefice, known informally as The Ross Parishes.

## Early Beginnings

When the Domesday Book was compiled in 1086, the population of Ross was said to be 125. A priest is recorded, and so presumably there was a church. If so, there is now no trace of this building. Visitors who examine the exterior face of the north wall of the chancel may find several pieces of calcareous tufa. This substance, largely used by the Normans, has been thought to indicate the re-use in the present building of material from a Norman church.



The whiter stone is Tufa, one of a few examples in the north wall of the chancel. This stone was much favoured by Norman builders but largely exhausted by the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. Where fragments are found in later buildings this is often a sign on masons reusing materials from a previous building.

According to Duncumb: The present building was erected in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, with later additions, in place of an edifice destroyed in the Wars of Stephen.

Nikolaus Pevsner in the "Buildings of England" suggests that the surviving south arcade of the nave is 'early or mid 13<sup>th</sup> Century'.

A vicar of Ross is recorded in 1274 and a Rector was instituted in 1277. There was a Rural Dean of Ross in 1148 or 1149 and, as already noted, a priest was among the tenants recorded in the Domesday Book (1086).

It seems safe, therefore, to say that most of the earliest fabric dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. By the middle of the fourteenth century the East end had been extended and the tower added, together with the porches to the North and South. The Markye Chapel on the South side was attached in 1510. The present ground plan of the church was completed in the nineteenth century with the addition of the organ chamber.

It has been often quoted that the church was dedicated in 1316. This, too, is probably incorrect, and presumably refers to an entry in the Bishop's Register from that year when the Bishop of Hereford (Richard Swinfield) gave permission for the Bishop of St

Dauids to dedicate altars in the church (probably related to John de Ross's chantry which was setup around that time).

DEDICATION OF THE ALTARS OF ROS. Memorandum that on the 5th of May, in the year of Dom. 1316, at Bosebury the lord committed

510 Register of Richard Swinfield.

A.D. 1316. literary changes to the lord D., by the grace of God bishop of Meneven, to dedicate the altars built in the church of Ros and the portable altars to be offered to him there on his next arrival at the said church, and notwithstanding that the church itself is situated in the diocese of Hereford.

*(translation from the original Latin)*

## Chantries, chapels and priests

During the Middle Ages, up to the Reformation, there was a growing practice in the Church whereby those who could afford it, setup and endowed chantry chapels in churches (and elsewhere). At the altars of these, masses would be celebrated and prayers would be said by a priest especially employed to do so, for the soul of the donor.

A good deal of confusion exists over the number, dedications and locations of chantries and chapels and that existed in St Mary's during the Middle Ages.

It is clear from the Bishops' Registers of the 13<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries (see below) that there was certainly a **chantry to the Blessed Virgin Mary**, setup by John de Ross in 1316, probably where the Rudhall monuments are today. A second chantry was connected with the **Fraternity of St Thomas the Martyr**, and the brothers apparently ran a hospice in the town" (Pat Hughes & Heather Hurley: The Story of Ross 1999). A number of references exist to the amalgamation of these two chantries after the Black Death after which a single priest looked after the two. One reference (Bishop Trefnant 1402) exists in the Registers to a chantry to a **St Calewe**, though it seems likely that this is a mistake (see notes below).

Other possibilities are chapels (not necessarily chantries) to **St Margaret** (remembered by Thomas Jenkins and mentioned by Fosbroke), **St George** and **St Nicholas** (referenced in the will of Jehane Herbert of Alton Court in 1602).

What we can be sure of is that there are piscina at the end of the north and south aisles, in the Markye Chapel (though that dates from 1510), and at the level of the former Rood Screen, so there were certainly altars in these locations (as well as the high altar, of course)

Fosbroke / Silas Taylor mentions the following:

There were two chantries of our Lady, the one founded by the forementioned John de Rosse, both well endowed : another chantry for the service of St. George." Mr. [Thomas] Jenkins thinks, that there was also an altar of S. Margaret, and he adds, that in an obscure account of the heretofore benefactions to the Church of Ross, occur the names of Walter de la Pole, and Isabella de la Pole, widow. Isabella Mercer widow, also by will in 1482, after usual oblations to the Mother Church of Hereford, the high altar, &c. gave or charged her lands in Blacknorle to devout uses in this Church.

The residence of the Chantry priests occupied the site of the School on the north side. (Mr Jenkins) [the current St Mary's Hall]

After the Reformation, a Grammar school was kept in the Chantry House, or old Church House.

Some references from the Bishops Registers:

1313 - Jan. 14. Inspeximus and confirmation by the bishop and chapter of the provisions made by **John de Ross for a chantry** in the church of Ross, and institution of Thomas de Hope, as chantry priest. [the entry goes on to specify the lands – 64+ acres in “La Calewe in the parish of Walford etc.” “for God and blessed Mary and the parish church of Ros” - endowed in perpetuity]

1316. Mar. 7.- *Mandates to the vicars of Ross and Walford to give public notice of the foundation of the chantry of John de Ross.*

1330 Mar 24 Walter de Mortone. Chantry in Ross church. John de Ross, bp. of Carlisle.

1366 Nov 2 Chantry in Ross church. Thomas Hogges, chaplain. The bishop.

1377 – “... Thomas Hogges, chaplain of a certain chantry perpetually in the same which the venerable father **Lord John de Rosse** ... In these times, because of the pestilences that had occurred in the kingdom of England in the past [the Black Death] ... that the fruits and proceeds of the aforementioned chantry are worth little or nothing, and it was to the honour of God, **Saint Mary**, and **Saint Thomas**, a certain society or brotherhood in the aforementioned town of Rosse ... which aforesaid acres and tenements

are not sufficient in these days for the proper support of a presbyter celebrating divine services in the same church, [wherefore they supplicate us to grant] the said two chantries for the proper support of one chaplain. [A note in the margin: "Lord John Rosse, Bishop of Carlisle, founded a chantry in the church of Rosse where he was born and buried"]

1402 May 12 **Chantry of S. Calewe**, Ross. Hugh Ballard. Henry Moton and Robert Carter. [it seems likely that this is a mistake. 1) Land from La Calewe (Walford) was used by John de Ross to endow his chantry, 2) these chaplains are listed below associated with that, 3) No St Calewe seems to have existed.]

1406 Sep 21 [1] Chantry of the altar of St. Mary in Ross church. Founded in honour of St Thomas the Maryre - Thos. Asshe, chaplain. Hy. Moton, armiger, and Robt. Cartere of Ross.

1421 Apr 28 Chantry of S. Thomas Martyr, Ross. Thomas Ash, chaplain, vicar of Colunham, diocese of Sarum. Exchange with Thomas Milly, priest of chantry of S. Thomas Martyr, Ross.

1466 Jan 1 Chantry of the B.V.M. and S. Thomas the Martyr in Ross church. John Hide, chapl. The bishop. Res. of Thomas Milly. [6]

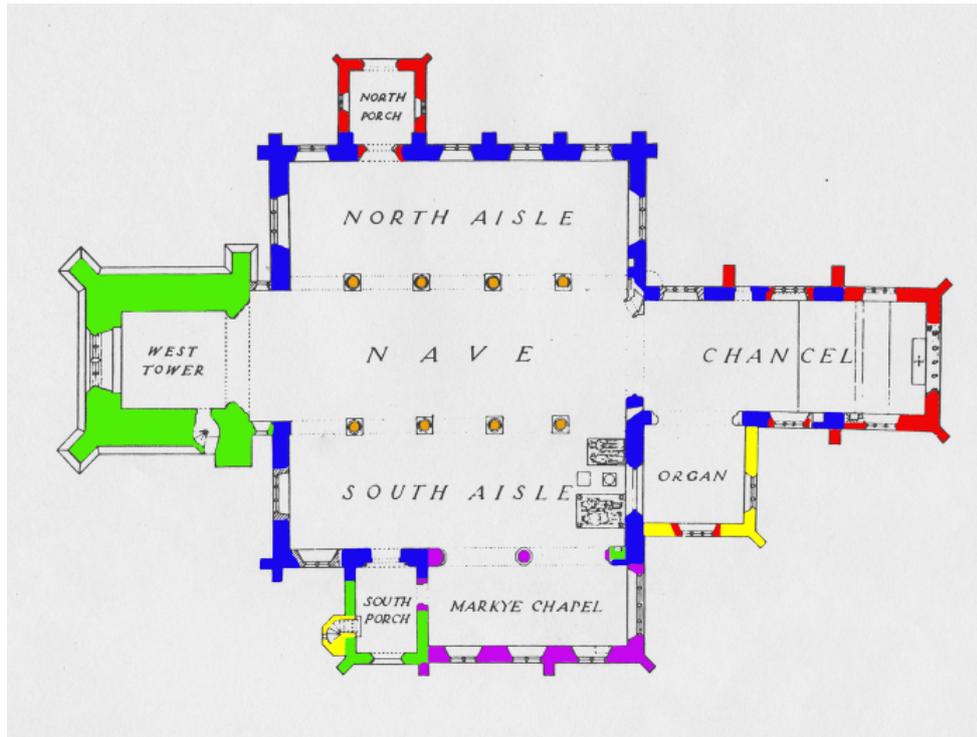
+ Other changes of chaplain in John Stanbury's registers.

1480 July 14th, Sept. 21, 1482. Sept. 22.- Thomas Robertes, chaplain of the chantry of the B.V.M. and S. Thomas the martyr, Ross, for study for one year, and to farm the chantry for the repair of the fabric.

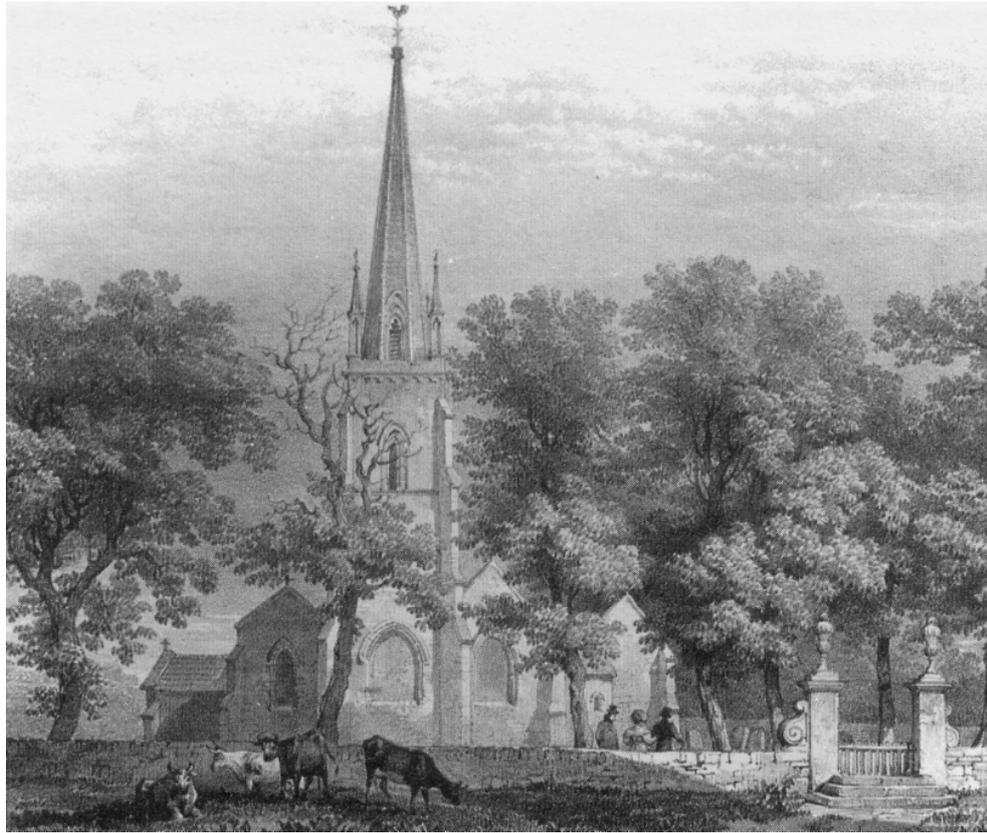
1530 Oct 11 The chantry in Ross ch. founded by John Ross. Walter Hoke, art. mag. The bishop. Res. of William Ogle. Death of Walter Buckland.

1531 Jun 10 The chantry of John Ross, in Ross ch. John Tayleur. The bishop. Res. of Walter Hoke.

1531 – Bishop Booth (of Hereford Cathedral's Booth Porch) *Commission to the rural dean of Ross to hold an inquiry as to the dilapidation of the buildings of John Ross's chantry.*



A view of the church and church yard from the north from an engraving by Newman & Co in 1847



A print taken from an 1832 painting of the church and Prospect William Farrer.

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## 2. Nave, Aisles and Seating

### The Nave

**Nave** That part of a church, between the main front and the chancel and choir, which is assigned to the laity. It is often separated from the sanctuary by a screen, and from the side aisles by columns or pillars. The term is generally thought to be derived from the Latin *navis*, 'ship,' this being a symbol of the Church, but it may be a corrupt form of the Greek *naos*, 'temple'.

(Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church)

The nave of St Mary's is separated from the side aisles by most unusual columns. High above the centre arch of the south arcade is a small plaque which reads:

This & the Northern  
Row of Columns, the  
Roofs of the North &  
Middle Isles, & greatest  
Part of the Northern  
Wall were rebuilt  
MDCCXLIII.

The guidebook from the 1930s states that "In 1743 the north and south arcades of the nave were taken down and re-built with new material up to the moulded band course in each pillar, above which they are of the 13th Century, re-set. The moulded capitals and bases of the pillars are mostly original."

It is interesting that Pevsner seems to take the plaque on the south wall as evidence that the nave was built back higher than previously.

One needs to realize at once that the present height of the piers dates only from 1743, when their lower halves were added (and the N wall was also mostly rebuilt): this, of course, changes the character of the interior completely.

The moulded bands are certainly an unusual and puzzling feature of the church. An alternative explanation of the bands would be the re-use of columns from elsewhere

when the church was built. It is certainly the case that the capitals to the nave pillars are of several different styles. Pevsner again:

The S arcade comes first. Except for the E bay, this looks early to mid-thirteenth century: circular piers, circular abaci, double-chamfered arches. W respond still with trumpet scallop capital, entirely renewed. The matching NW respond is mostly original.

The N arcade is rather later, with octagonal abaci to the circular piers; the easternmost pier on the S already has the same feature. The N arcade's E respond is tripartite and filleted, so we have reached the late 13<sup>th</sup> C.

The Parish registers give us the following:

1725 – This year ye middle isle was cieled.

1728 – This year ye two western galleries on each side of ye organ gallery were built. The chapters [capitals] of ye pillars were also gilt.

1731 – This year the south aisle was cieled.

A report (which can be found at HARC) by the Diocesan architect, Thomas Nicholson, ahead of the 1878 restoration indicates that by this stage the whole of the upper parts of the church were in a pretty desperate state. It comments that the roof of the central aisle (prior to his work) had at some stage had its pitch lowered by some six feet by cutting down the old roof timbers. The Perpendicular style ribbed and panelled ceilings, here and in the north aisle (of which the present south aisle ceiling is something of a later copy) were destroyed and plain plaster ceilings used in their place. The “cieled” references above between 1725-31 probably refer to this work. All of this was corrected in 1878 with completely new roofs on the central and north aisles. From fragments of the original roof that had been reused in the botched reroofing it was clear that the ribs and panels of the earlier ceilings were illuminated and the panels between them were also decorated in some way, possibly powdered with stars.



A photograph of the church taken from the back of the nave at some time in the first half of the 20th Century but after 1921 because the present organ is in place. Note the gothic style lanterns in the nave. The bottom right corner shows the photograph embossed with the name Ediswan. This was a piece of merchandise for the company that installed the lighting.

## Rood Loft & Rood Screen

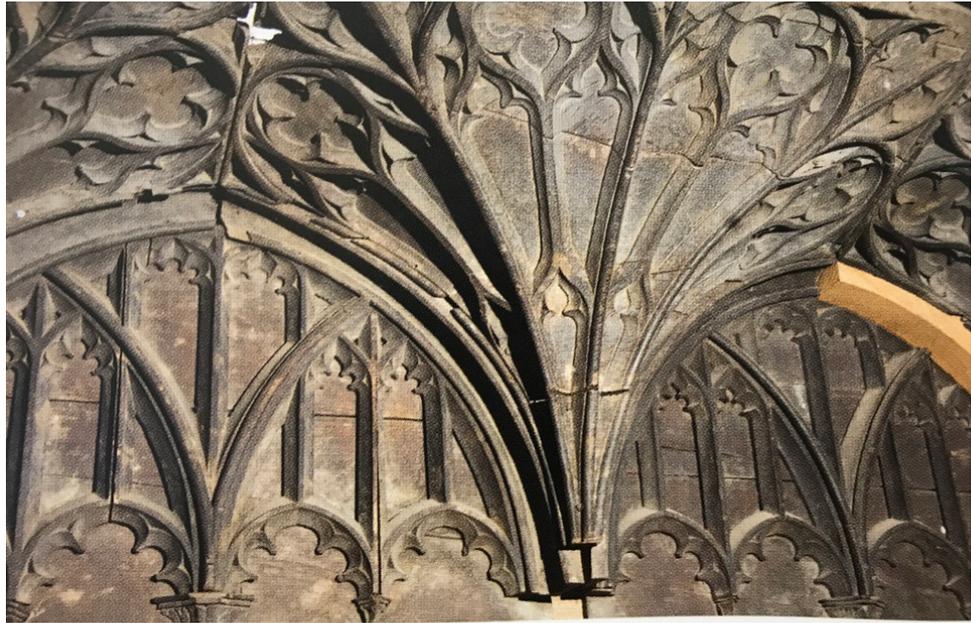
Behind the chancel arch, on the north wall of the chancel, may be seen the ancient square-headed upper doorway of the rood-loft staircase. The northern respond of the chancel archway has been partly removed for the modern (1878) doorway just behind the pulpit which opens upon the foot of the same rood-loft staircase. The doorway which used to lead directly to the platform of the Rood may be seen above the pulpit. A Rood screen is known to have been placed across the chancel arch by Thomas Chippenham (Vicar 1462-86). Fosbroke has

“At his insistence a curious and beautiful Rood Loft was erected in the Church (after the fashion of the Rood Loft at Ledbury) at public charge.”

Stratford quotes an unacknowledged source:

“By a deed bearing date 1485, Walter Merton did, with others cause a sumptuous rood loft to be carved and setup in the Church of Ross The Merton family were of distinction among the ancient inhabitants of Ross.”

In medieval times the Rector was responsible for the chancel and the congregation, the nave. Rood lofts were generally accepted as being a part of the nave which might explain why Merton is credited with building Chippenham’s screen.



We have no idea what the Ross rood screen would have looked like, no records remain. These fragments of Ledbury's medieval rood screen removed in 1815 can perhaps give us a clue as we know the two were similar.

In the rood loft, or perhaps fixed to the wall above, would have stood the Holy Rood - a large crucifix with the figures of the Virgin Mary and of St John the Evangelist on either side. From the presence of a piscina just to the right of the chancel arch, it appears that the screen was substantial enough for a priest to say Mass at an altar on it. There is a suggestion that at some stage there was an organ on this screen prior to its move to a gallery in the tower. A Harleian manuscript of Silas Taylor (1658) tells us that

“In the Chancelle are the cells of an ancient Quire and over them, towards the body of the church an Organ Loft.”

Fosbroke quotes this and goes on to comment

“The cells are the pews of the Rector and other; and the Organ Loft should be ... the Rood Loft.”

We can therefore assume there was an organ on the Rood Loft by 1658 (see the section on the organ).

There is a suggestion that this screen / loft was taken down around 1820 (though this date is mentioned only in the 1980s guidebook. Martin Morris (“The Book of Ross-on-

Wye" 1980) suggests it was taken down before 1780 without quoting sources.) Presumably the upper doorways and the piscina mentioned above were then covered over as they were "discovered" behind plaster during the 1878 restoration and reinstated. The chancel arch was also raised to its present height at this time by extending the pillars by some six feet (the original arch was retained and re-erected). When this work was underway it became apparent that stones that stones from an earlier building (Norman) had been reused in the construction of this arch (Stratford records this in an account from the time).



Travelling back in time a bit from the last photograph of the nave, this one appears to show an earlier electric lighting scheme where the old gas lamps in the nave have been brought back into use and electrified. The 1862 corona (in the next photograph)

## Nave Altar

Since the 1960s the main emphasis in Anglican worship, as in many other Christian traditions, has been on “the Lord's people gathered round the Lord's table on the Lord's day”. In keeping with this, the table needs to be where the people are, in the nave. At St Mary's, as in most churches, the old high altar has been left, but a platform has been built out from the chancel step, and on it stands, mainly for the Eucharist, the principal Sunday service, a locally crafted open oak table. It was the gift of two members of the

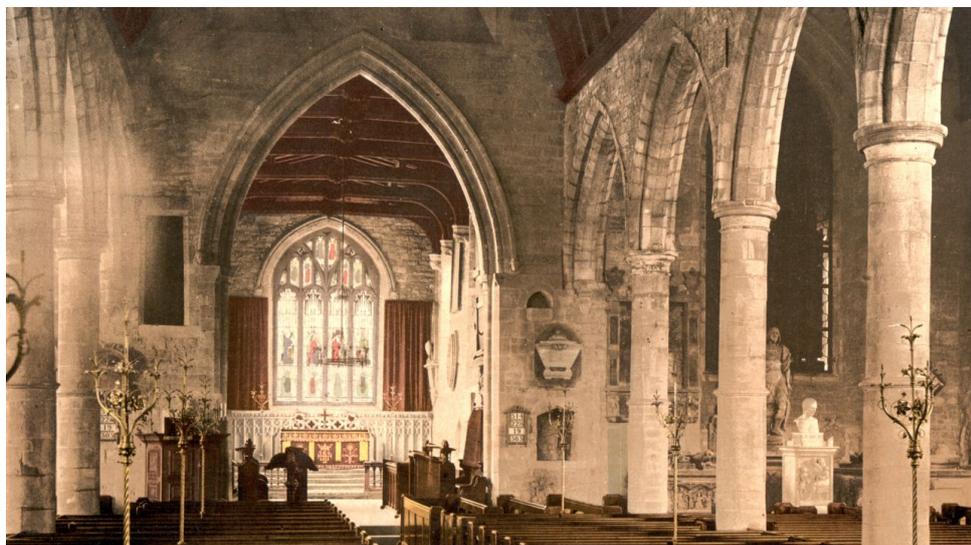
congregation and dedicated in 2018. It replaced a “temporary” nave altar that had served for about forty years.

## Lectern

One of the most important achievements of the Reformation in this country was to ensure that everyone had access to the Bible. Every parish church had to have a copy out on a reading desk (often called a lectern). People could come and turn the pages for themselves, or they could come and listen to the clergy read. Every day of the week they could come and listen to a chapter from the Old Testament and a chapter of the New Testament in the context of Morning Prayer, and again at Evening Prayer, and people like John Kyrle did just that. The lectern now in St Mary's is typical of those made in the 19th century in that the Bible rests on the open wings of an eagle, and the talons of the eagle curl round a ball. It is said that the Roman eagle came and conquered the world, and that the Bible is more important than the power of Rome.

## Pulpit

From the pulpit, the minister preaches, relating the Word of God to our experience of the world in which we live. Churches reveal the importance they attach to preaching by the size and substance of the pulpit and where it is placed, and that importance has changed through the ages. Here it looks as though the plain panelled oak pulpit allows the sermon to speak for itself without elaborate support. It may well date from the seventeenth century (Pevsner), when it would have been high enough for the preacher to be seen from the box pews. The Victorians lowered it into its present position in 1862.



This charmingly coloured photograph can be dated to between 1895 and 1921 by the lack of the

present organ (1921). It's just possible to make out the iron screen where the diapason pipes now stand in the arch. This was given by Right Hon. Montague Bernard when the Rudhall glass was removed from the window. The reredos behind the high altar was very new but note that (presumably) already the altar has been changed in front of it so that it partially covers the screen. The gas lamps installed with the pews in 1862 are already redundant but remain (it's difficult to see how the nave was lit at this stage!). The corona in the chancel was also introduced in 1862.

## **Pews and Seating**

It is uncertain when pews were first introduced at St Mary's (or at most other churches). They likely would not always have been there; in mediaeval times many people in congregations stood. Nicholas Orm in his book "Going to Church in the Middle Ages (2021) suggests "they [pews] were probably fairly common by the later fourteenth century. The final version of Langland's Piers Plowman in about the 1380s mentions wives and widows enclosed in pews, as this was familiar to readers." But he also points out that the Bishop of Exeter, as early as 1287, pronounced against the reserving of seats in churches. It was generally around the time of Henry VIII and the Reformation, when services became longer and with a growing focus on "the Word", that pews were more of a regular feature in English churches.

There have probably been at least three sets of pews in St Mary's, however, and now the church is furnished with individual modern chairs allowing a flexible approach to seating and the use of open spaces from time to time. It is recorded that in 1851, shortly before the pews recently removed were installed, the seating capacity of the church was 1400. Quite how they managed that we are not sure, though the tiny children's pews crammed into the tower would have helped (see plan below). Today we have 260 chairs (though some considerable standing room capacity when they are all out).

We know that in the 1743 restoration most of the pews were replaced. This has been particularly remembered as the one that had allegedly been used daily by John Kyrle at the top of the north aisle was allowed to remain, out of respect.

In the eighteenth century churches were commonly furnished with box pews. The church was maintained largely from the rents for these pews, rents which varied with their size and prominence. We know that in 1851, of the 1400 seats available, only 400 were "free." These pews often had high sides (to keep out the cold and to hide behind during long services), were installed privately, and were treated as private property as can be seen from the note copied below, found in the Rectory Box and now at HARC.

July ye 16 1748

Received of Mr Walter Smith a valuable Consideration for a seat on the West side of Ross Church the Property of the said Thomas Carwardine for which I resign my right and Title to the said Walter Smith in possession of the same

as wittness my hand Thos Carwardine

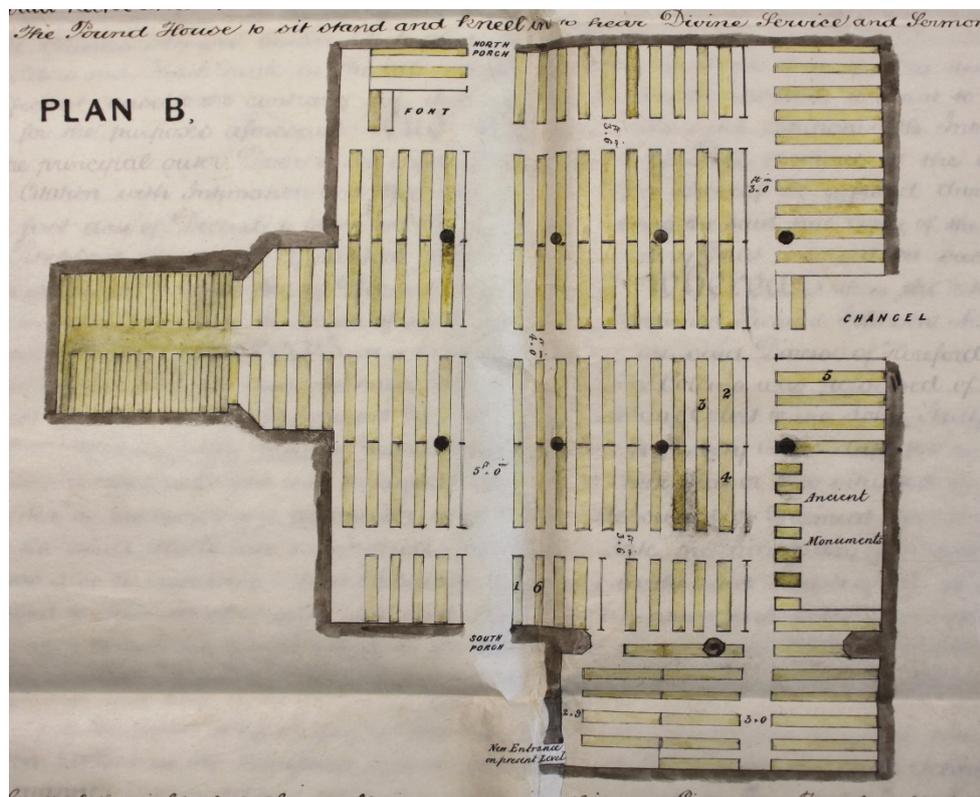
wittness hereto Peter Thomas



An engraving of the church before the 1862 restoration, and a fascinating scene – so much has changed. This is the earliest image we have of the interior. The chancel arch is 6ft lower than it is today. The walls are covered with plaster, lower pitch of roof in the main and north aisle, missing

tracery in the east window. The nave contains the high sided pews from 1743/4 The 18th Century font, now further west, is also evident here at the crossing. Note also the railings around the monuments (removed in 1863), the gallery in the Markye Chapel (removed 1878), and a taller version of the present pulpit. It's a shame we can't quite see the organ which would have been in a gallery by the south porch.

In the nineteenth century a strong belief grew up that all church sittings should be free and equal (we are all equal in the eyes of God). This was an important motivation behind the alterations made to this church in 1862, when all the old pews were removed, and new ones installed. The 1862 pews were all of an identical design. Every available piece of floor space was covered with pews as can be seen from this 1862 plan.



The 1862 pew plan. Notice the tiny children's pews in the tower. The whole church, including the Markye Chapel, is covered in pews. The font by the north door was new, there is no provision for the 17<sup>th</sup> Century one we use today which must have been removed from the building (possibly to a garden which would help to explain the poor state of it today).

Six householders objected to the granting of the faculty for this work and took their case to the diocesan Consistory Court, because they would lease their seats. The Chancellor of the Diocese ruled that the restoration could go ahead, but also made provision for six seats to be "forever enclosed seats with doors the same height as the highest portion of the said seat and the occupiers may place and keep sufficient and proper fastenings and handles as shall be necessary to preserve them from being interfered with or

intruded upon.” The occupiers have gone, so now have their pews, but the pew end and the gate been retained in their honour and are now in storage. In his guidebook Beattie commented that it was most unfortunate that good English oak was not used for the roofs and seats. He was quite right, by the time they were removed they were in a rather shabby state.

Chairs provide the seating in the main body of the church today. The 1863 pews were removed in 2017 and 2019 as part of a bold reordering of the internal space.

## Galleries

It was very common, in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, for galleries to be introduced into churches. This would certainly have helped to get to the huge seating capacity already mentioned in the early 19<sup>th</sup>.

We know from memorandums helpfully written into the church registers that:

1715: This year the gallery over the north door of the church was built

1716: This year the gallery over the south door of the church was built

1728: This year ye two western galleries (on each side of ye organ gallery [under the tower] were built. The chapters [capitals] of the pillars were also gilt.

There was also a gallery over the Markye Chapel as can partially be seen in the engraving above. It was taken down in 1863. The gallery over the south door later housed the organ before it moved to its present location.

## The North Aisle

**AISLE** Commonly any extension of the nave of a church made by the piercing of its side walls with a series of arches and the building on of an extension with a separate and lower roof, for the purpose of increased accommodation. Less frequently a similar extension of the chancel or transept. It is often, but quite wrongly, used of a gangway up the centre of a nave or elsewhere; and the corresponding expression 'centre aisle' is a contradiction in terms.” (Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church)

St Mary's, then, has three aisles (if the Marky chapel is not considered an aisle). The north and south aisles were not strictly speaking "extensions" at least not later extensions, as they date from the time of the original building and were an integral part of it. The normal way of entering St Mary's is from the north porch into the north aisle.

The east wall of the north aisle has some remarkable reminders of the past. Most obvious is the Virginia creeper, which replaced suckers from elms planted by John Kyrle in the 17th century just outside the window. There is a Victorian print which shows the elms growing up the window above the pew which Kyrle occupied daily for services. His pew survived the restoration of 1743 but was swept away in the 'pile-them-in' refurbishment of 1862. Similar suckers also grew in the window next to this one on the north wall of the aisle.





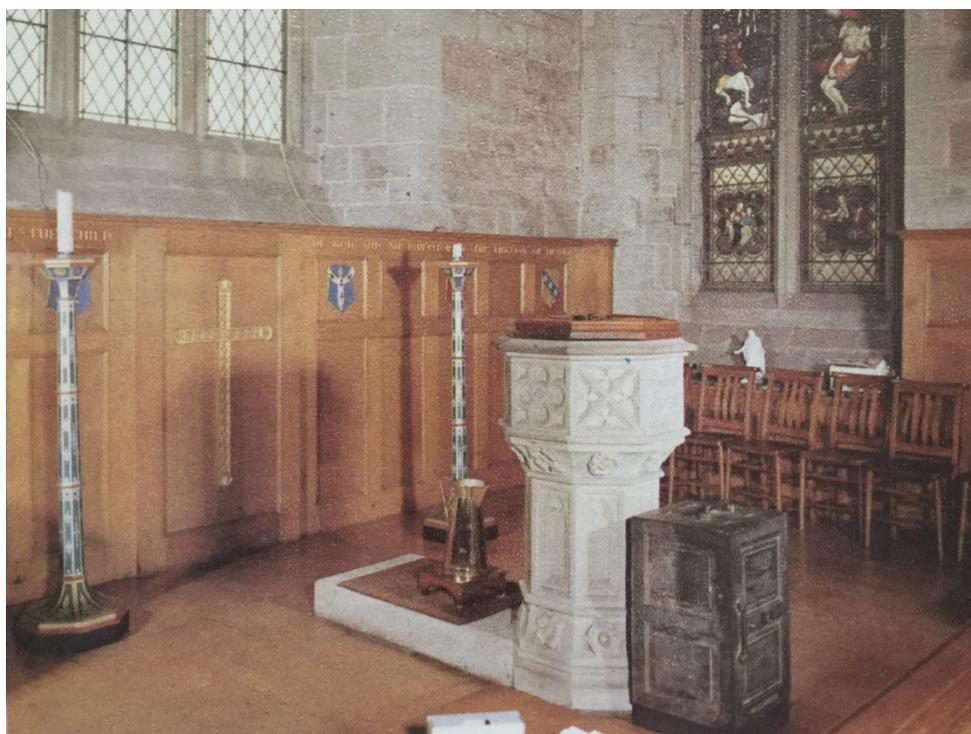
An image from the 1930s of a man tending the trees that grew in the church from the roots of Elms planted by John Kyrle. The trees eventually died and decayed and today have been replaced by a Virginia creeper. The iron rods which supported these trees remain.

In the wall at the east end of this aisle, is the oldest memorial in the church that is still legible, to Thomas Perrock. There is also one of the six piscina - a reminder that here too in mediaeval times stood an altar, perhaps belonging to one of the chantry chapels.

Traditionally, fonts are usually to be found at the entrance to churches, from 1863 and until 2017 there was a stone font by the north door. There was then a fashion at the end of the twentieth century for fonts to move to the east end of the church, and for this purpose the remains of the seventeenth century font, discarded probably in 1862, was brought back (we know not from where but the stat of it may suggests someone's garden) and placed by the first pillar in the north aisle. Now, with flexible seating which is adjusted for Baptisms, this font has returned to the west of the nave in a central

position, not far from where it probably started out and where it can be seen in the engraving above.

The space at the back of the north aisle is today occupied by two toilets and an enclosed children's room. These were installed in 2017. Prior to that, through the second half of the twentieth century, this space had been given over to a Baptistry. It was the gift of Mr and Mrs J. W. Done, in memory of their daughter, Mary Elizabeth, who died on a visit to Ross in 1942. It was dedicated by the Bishop of Hereford (Rt. Rev. T. Longworth) on Sunday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 1950. The architect was Mr E.A. Roiser of Cheltenham, and the work was done by Messrs. A.R. Mowbray and Co., London and Oxford.



The Baptistry at the west end of the north aisle as it appeared in the 1980s (from the 1984 guide). The font we see here is now in storage.

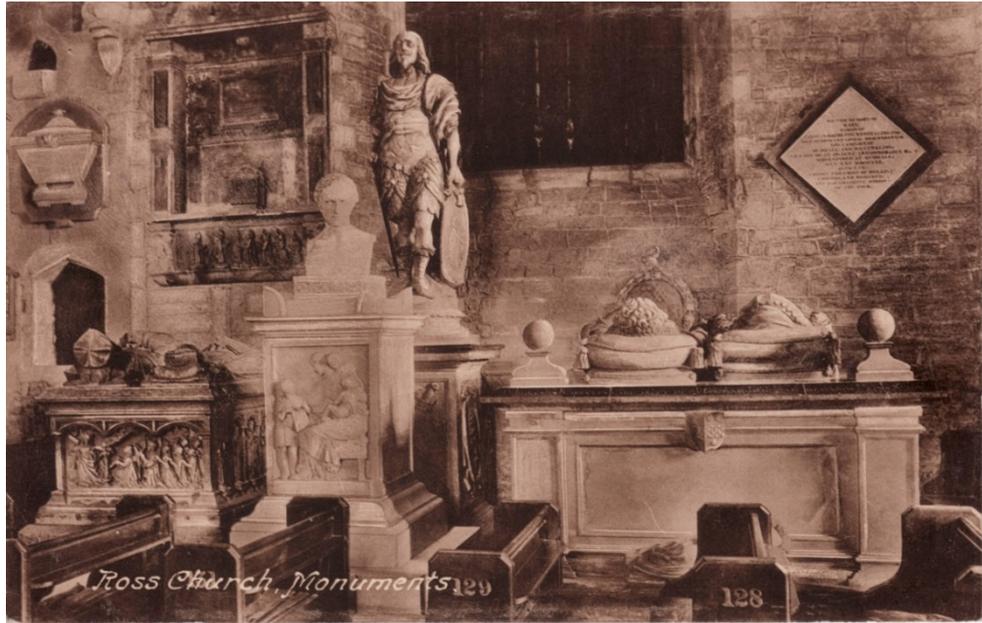
Most of the wooden panelling from the Baptistry has been retained and now lines the walls of the children's room. The shields were (reading from South to North): the Kyrle Arms; the Diocese of Hereford current arms; St Mary; the Province of Canterbury; the Diocese of Hereford old arms; the Rudhall arms; and on the North wall (this piece of the screen was not retained), the Ingram arms. The font has been removed to storage, for the time being, in the south porch. The windows of the north wall, on either side of the north porch were swapped around at this time in order that that stained glass would not be lost in the toilets.

By the north door is a *Peace wall hanging* which was pieced and quilted by Marlene Cameron in memory of her husband, Sam, and was dedicated on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1996. The names embroidered in it were members of the congregation at the time.

## The South Aisle

The appearance of the south aisle is somewhat different from the other two and that impression is largely given because of the different roof and ceiling. The original roof construction of 1450 remains, it is of trussed rafters and was, when constructed designed to be open to view. It was subsequently closed in with oak ribs and (now) pitch pine panels in between – these were plaster panels before the 1878 restoration. In 1878 the whole ceiling was renewed but the original oak ribs were reused. More importantly most of the oak bosses were also reused. Many of these are very elaborate and each unique. They are reckoned to be from different periods, not least because about 40 had to be remade in 1878 to replace ones that had gone missing and been replaced with pieces of deal covered in plaster. Some of the later ones were described by JA Stratford as “somewhat rude in character”.

During the refurbishments of 1862, almost the whole of the south aisle (indeed the whole church) was made over to seating, which extended into the Markye Chapel and even obtruded onto the base of the Rudhall monuments.



A postcard of the Rudhall monuments. The photograph must have been taken after the addition of the organ chamber in 1873 but before the installation of the present organ in 1921. The close proximity of pews to the monuments can be seen.

Later, a corner was cleared at the back to serve as a children's chapel and eventually a vestry for the clergy. Pews were then steadily cleared away to create other spaces until the whole lot was removed in 2017 and 18.



A postcard of a children's corner in the area of the church now occupied by the clergy vestry.

Most prominent in the south aisle, however, is the fine collection of monuments at the east end. These are monuments to the Rudhall family and are covered in some detail in a chapter devoted entirely to them.

A piscina to the right of the monuments is another reminder of the past. This one has a ball-flower ornamentation around it – a form of decoration particularly abundant in this part of the country in the first couple of decades of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. More of it can be found high up in the Markye Chapel (on what was, before 1510, an outside wall) and on the tower. The presence of a piscina shows that there was an altar here before the reformation where the monuments now stand. This would have been a chantry chapel, which the Rudhall family acquired, apparently just before the Reformation. Records show that it had been setup in 1307 by John de Ross He was a native of Ross and certainly had connections with the church as a priest, though not as Rector as some lists suggest. He eventually Bishop of Carlise.

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### 3. The Chancel

**Chancel:** (Latin cancellus). Originally the part of the church immediately about the altar, now called the 'sanctuary'. When further space was reserved for clergy and choir westward from the sanctuary, the word was applied to this area as well, and hence is now normally employed for the entire area within the main body of the church east of the nave and transepts. ... (Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church)

The Chancel of St Mary's is unusual in being almost as long as the nave. It is generally supposed to have been extended about half a century after the church was first built. It is hard to imagine what the chancel would have looked like before the restoration of 1878, around this date it was changed very substantially, leaving only the floor tomb slabs, the walls and their memorials from an earlier time.

The choir stalls, installed in the 1862 restoration, are of oak and form one of several memorials in the church to Colonel Middleton. They were subsequently extended at the west ends and the upper decks added. Impressive stained-glass windows on either side are memorials to two former Rectors, and there are many more memorials on the walls, some interesting in themselves, and some for the people they recall. These are listed in detail in an appendix.

The roof was replaced in 1878, like most throughout the building. There is more oak in this roof than in the others with elaborately carved bosses at the centre of each of the main beams. Supporting these beams are a series of stone carved heads at the top of the walls. Stratford gives us their identity.

On the north side, from the east: St Joseph, St Peter, St Stephen, St Anne, The Queen of Edward the Confessor, St Sylvester, The Queen of Ethelbert.

On the south side (from east to west): The Blessed Virgin, St Paul, Mary Magdalene, St Joachim, Edward the Confessor, St Chrysostom, King Ethelbert.

The heads at the termination of the label over the organ chamber are John the Baptist and Elizabeth his mother.

The heads at the termination of the label of the chancel arch are The Virgin and St John [presumably a nod to the figures of the rood]

JA Stratford gives us a great account of changes to the sanctuary in 1895, including a few gory details of bodies:

Visitors who have not inspected the church since 1885 will be struck with the great improvement in the flooring. Owing to the inconvenient arrangement of the altar rail at the top of three uneven steps, it was thought advisable to bring it down to the lowest step, and to throw the two upper steps back towards the east end. By the liberality of Miss Bernard of Over-Ross, a good friend of the church, the alterations were effected in the summer of the year mentioned, the chancel being reopened on 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

In place of the old forest stone slabs, there is a splendid groundwork of highly polished vari-coloured Devonshire and Irish marble. ... During the progress of the work it became necessary for some of the workmen to descend into the tomb where the various coffins containing the bodies of the Kyrle family ... were found piled on top of each other. The wooden coffins which had enclosed the leaden shells were more or less decayed except that which contained the remains of John Kyrle.

It is somewhere on record that on this tomb being opened some years after John Kyrle was interred, his silvery hair was found to have grown through the coffin and spread itself all around. Such a foolish myth (for it was nothing else) was completely dispelled on the opening of the tomb in 1895.

It is worthy of note that while the old flooring was being removed it was seen that there was a "set" in the south east corner of the chancel wall. On digging a few feet down it was discovered that the foundation was resting almost entirely on sand. The remains of several human bodies were exhumed which led to the interesting discovery that the chancel at some distant period was extended by about 20 feet, thus enclosing within the walls the bodies of those who had been interred outside them. As the foundation of the new walls was built above the graves, the decomposition of the coffins formed a source of danger, which was happily discovered and remedied before any real mischief was caused.

There is a timeline in appendix 1 but as so many alterations have taken place in the chancel over the last two hundred years; here is a summary of that:

- 1284? Church built including most of the chancel.
- 1350 Chancel is extended eastwards.
- 1485 Rood screen and Rood loft installed at the chancel arch

- 1783 Notes in the registers tell us that in 1783 “a parochial library was established by Dr Bray’s associates”. And that in 1784 “bookcases were erected in the chancel for the reception of the parochial library”
- c1800 Decayed tracery removed from east window – 15<sup>th</sup> century glass installed piecemeal into iron mullions.
- 1808 Another note in the registers “the chancel was new roofed and repaired during the summer”
- 1820? Rood screen removed. (this is mentioned in the 1984 guid – evidence still to be found)
- 1862 Present choir stalls installed (later extended westward)
- 1873 The organ chamber with arch in the South wall of the chancel created. The organ from the balcony over the Markye Chapel was moved there.
- 1873 East Window restored, as a memorial to Dr Ogilvie
- 1878 Chancel roof reconstructed to new design; chancel arch raised by six feet.
- 1895 Altar rail moved west and an opening in the centre (rather than the north side) created (gates fitted later), levels / position of steps changed marble floor installed in the sanctuary.
- 1921 Present organ by Hele completed
- 1948 Present altar installed. Originally with riddle posts and hangings, which were removed in the 1980s. The angels are now back and sitting on the reredos, the posts have been repurposed at the other end of the church to provide a structure for six display panels.
- 2026 Marble Sanctuary floor taken up and re-laid with better foundations and some replacement marble.

## Sanctuary

Enclosed within the sanctuary by communion rails, which appear to date from the seventeenth century, is the High Altar, which is part of the 1939-45 war memorial. Behind it is a Victorian stone reredos designed for a shorter communion table. To the right of it is the credence table on which bread and wine for communion are kept. There are tomb slabs, including that of John Kyrle. At least one of the chairs in the sanctuary is said to have been owned by John Kyrle himself.

In the south wall of the sanctuary are two piscina. This may seem a little strange. The western most one is of an earlier date. It is presumed that the 15<sup>th</sup> century one, further east, was installed after the chancel was extended in the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century when it was presumably decided that the original was too far away from the altar. This later piscina is a double one (two drain holes) but has now been converted into an Aubrey (where consecrated bread and wine was once stored).

The Memorials in the Chancel are detailed in an appendix.

## High Altar

People argue most keenly over things that are most important to them. Some would not accept even the use of the term 'High Altar', and it is difficult to write anything about the most important feature in a church without being thought to take sides. An informed guess would be that when St Mary's was first built, there would have been a stone altar, possibly the same width as the east window, and standing below it and just detached from the wall. Here would have been offered the principal Mass on Sundays and Holy Days, other Masses being offered at other altars. Whether or not the same altar had remained there up to the Reformation we do not know, it would then have been removed. After that there would have been a wooden communion table, which might or might not have been kept in the old place. If other churches are anything to go by, it could have been moved for use, to where the clergy and people of each generation thought best. There is a photograph taken just before the 1878 work showing a communion table under the East window, with a heavy classical pedimented reredos. The written tablets on either side would probably have shown the text of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. Above are two larger tablets, which look like the ones now in the choir vestry.



A photograph of the church taken in 1873, five years before a major restoration when the chancel arch was raised, plaster was removed from the walls and many other changes were made to the building.

The next phase can be inferred from the stonework still visible. The altar-table then must have been much shorter and taller than the present one (which dates from 1948). People remember it as what is called an Old English Altar, with curtains behind and at the side, with riddle posts, and candlesticks. Presumably this is the altar in the picture above in the chapter on the Nave.

THIS ALTAR WAS ERECTED  
BY PARISHIONERS IN MEMORY  
OF THE MEN OF ROSS WHO  
GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE  
WORLD WAR 1939-1945

The Altar referred to on the memorial consisted of the present communion table with proper frontals for the seasons, together with riddel posts and hangings in what was called the Old English design. It was dedicated on Sunday 14th November 1948. There is also a memorial tablet in the Markye chapel, bearing the names and units of the fallen.



The present high altar with the furnishings introduced with it in 1948. These were removed in the early 1980s, the angels holding candles have since found their way back and are on top of the stone reredos. The four post can now be seen at the back of the church supporting six display panels.

Between 1981 and 1984, the posts and hangings were moved into storage, as the fashion is now for priests to stand behind the altar to preside at the Eucharist. This is designed to emphasise their unity with the congregation, rather than their making an offering on behalf of and as leader of the congregation. It means that we now see more of the late Victorian stone tracery behind the altar. This was evidently designed for a smaller but higher table than the one now in use.

## Sanctuary Floor

The three levels of the sanctuary were reorganised in 1895 when the flooring was also replaced by the present marble. This was a gift of Miss Bernard (presumably Ellen, commemorated in a window in the Markye Chapel). This article from the Ross Gazette (4<sup>th</sup> July 1895) explains all:

ROSS PARISH CHUROH. RE-OPENING OF THE CHANCEL.

Yesterday (Wednesday [3rd July 1895]) special services were held in Ross Parish Church, in connection with the re-opening of the chancel, after thorough renovation of the flooring, etc.

The necessity of making alterations in the chancel has been felt for many years, as the inconvenience of having the altar rails at the top of three uneven steps, which were worn and chipped away, was much felt, and in the case of aged communicants, these steps sometimes constituted a serious danger, in fact, several times recently, a fall which might have had serious consequences has narrowly been avoided. It was thought that it would very much improve matters if the altar rails were brought down to the lowest step and the other steps taken further back towards the communion table; but, owing to there being no funds available for the purpose, the necessary work could not be done.

In order to show that the present arrangement is no new idea, but was brought about soon after our late Rector, the Rev. R. H. Cobbold, M.A., came to Ross, it may, be interesting to give a quotation from the Ross Parish Magazine of March 1874.

After speaking of an Easter offering to the church of an oak eagle lectern it says:

*"The completion of the organ chamber has been delayed by the frost; but it is expected that it will be completed by the end of the present month, and that the present organ may be removed or a new organ erected in the chamber soon after Midsummer. The present altar rail will be removed, and a new altar rail will be presented. When this is done it will be desirable to throw the three steps further back, so as to have only one step at the rail, and so avoid the great discomfort which now exists in kneeling at the Holy Communion and at the marriage service. The floor of the chancel will then be laid with encaustic tiles."*

Immediately after Easter the chancel was closed, in order to effect the improvements, which it was thought would be completed by Whitsuntide. During the progress of the work, however, the foundations of the chancel were found to be in such a perilous condition that they had to be underpinned for some distance with concrete. This it was that caused the delay of the re-opening until yesterday.

The alterations suggested so far back as 1874, were not, however, carried out until this year, when Miss Bernard, of Over-Ross, to whom the Church owes a deep debt of gratitude, generously undertook to remedy, at her own cost, the inconveniences existing in the chancel.

Prior to the alterations, it will be remembered that the flooring of the chancel consisted merely of plain slabs with three or four tombstones near the altar rails.

Now it presents quite a different and altogether more beautiful appearance. In place of the old Forest Stone slabs there is a splendid groundwork of highly polished varicoloured marble.

The pattern of the centre comprises stars of different sizes and intricate construction, whilst on either side squares of marble are placed, each square being edged round with a darker border of the same material.

In place of the three steps at the altar rail there is now only one, on which the communicants kneel, and further back three more steps are placed, one of them being at an unequal distance from the other two, whilst at the extreme end, the communion table, which has been lengthened by nearly two feet, rests on a raised ground of coloured marble.

During the alterations the four tombstones behind the altar rails were carefully taken up and have been replaced a few inches lower than formerly. The tombstones thus replaced are Mr. John Baker's and the Rev. John Newton's on the right hand side of the chancel looking east, whilst those on the left side commemorate the memory of John Kyrle, the "Man of Ross," and members of the Collins family. John Kyrle's stone, being the largest, reaches from the altar rail to the second step.

The contract for the marble work was placed in the hands of Messrs. Blackler, of St. Mary, Church, near Torquay; and the preparatory work was done by Mr. Lewis, of Ross. All the marbles used in the work are Devonshire, with the exception of the green tinted one, which comes from Ireland.

The old altar rails have been replaced in their former position, as they are probably the ones put there when the church was built.

On either side of the east window are very choice and costly hangings, also kindly given by Miss Bernard.

An antique kneeling carpet for the communicants is placed outside the altar rails, and Are other smaller kneeling mats of the same material are also arranged in the sacrarium. These mats have been presented by a friend. Two other large mats of the same kind have also been given by Miss Bernard. The whole of the work has been carried out in a most satisfactory manner; and the improvement, besides being a chaste and beautiful work of art, will prove a lasting one.

During the day four services were held in the church. Holy Communion was celebrated at 8 a.m., ... Mattins and Holy Communion were held at 11.30 a.m., Evensong at 6pm, and a choral service of praise was arranged to be held at 7pm at which Farmer's oratorio, " Christ and his Soldiers," was to be rendered by a large band and chorus; and between part 1 (The Life of Christ) and part 2 (The Life of the Christian) a short sermon to be preached by the Rev. R. Horton, Vicar of Dymock. The collections at all the services are to be devoted towards the provision of necessary filings within the chancel.

The band and chorus, which numbers in all 85 persons, are to be arranged in the chancel with the exception of the ladies, who will be seated in two pews Immediately in front of the reading desks.

The band is composed as follows:-

First violins: Miss Verschoyle, Miss Wilton, Miss Rumsey, Mrs. Wilkes,

Second violins: Mr. Parr, Miss G. Hewett, Mins Edwards, Miss B. Bellamy, Miss Barnwell.

Viola: Mr. B. London.

Cellos: Mr. W. C. F. Watkins, Miss Rumsey.

Double Bass: Nr. E. Andrew.

Flute: Mr. A. J. Tatam.

Clarinet: Rev. T H. Eyion (St. Devereuz).

Cornete: Mr. A.Knight, Mr. T. Jackson. Organist: Mie. Holford.

The annexed comprises the chorus: -

Sopranos: Mrs. Wooler, Mrs. Hewett. Mrs. Evans (Brampton), Miss M. London, Miss Stafford, Miss R. Clark, Miss. D. Hewett, Miss D. Holford, Miss K Harris, Miss Charles, and the choir boys.

Altos: Mrs. Faers, Miss Havergal. Miss R. London, Miss A. Bellamy, Miss Male, Mr. Edwards, Mr. R. J. Clark, Mr. T. Ryall, Mr. C. Groves.

Tenors: Mr J. H. Hall, Mr. Morgan, Mr. J. R. Webb, Mr. Faers, Mr. Maurice, Mr. H. J. Andrews, Mr. J. H. Bussell, Mr. Cowx, Mr. Christian, Mr. J. Watts, Mr. J. Clark, Mr. W. Small, Rev. T. R Money-Kyle.

Bass: Rev. A. Ley, Rev. H. Evans, Mr..E. J. Smith, Mr. J. E. S. Hewett, Mr. J. Turner, Mr. G. Innell, Mr. B. Mead, Mr. Cartwright, Mr. Lord, Mr Driver, Mr. A. Evans, Mr. W. H. Morris, and Mr. Holford.

Soloists: Troble, Master E. Eltome: alto, Mr. R. J. Clark; tenor, Mr. J. Clark; bass, Mr. H. Holford.

Mr. W. H. London, of Berkhamsted, conductor.

Oh, for those musical resources. Today!

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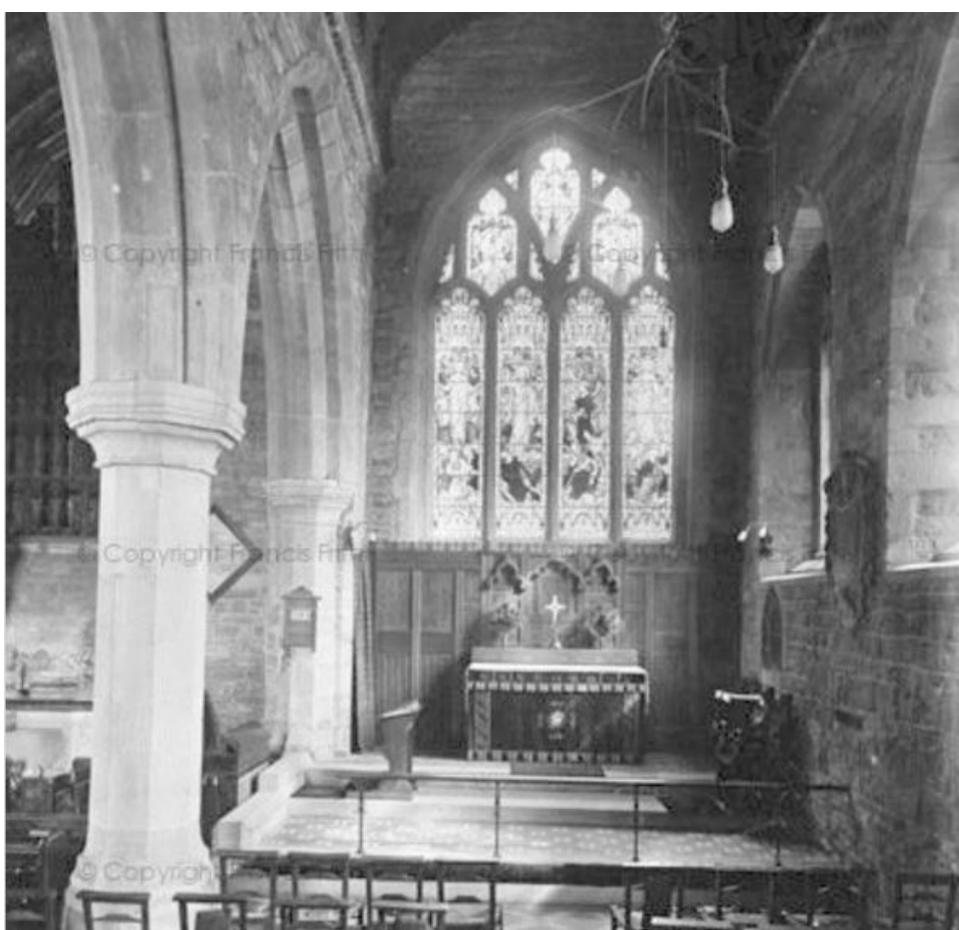
## 4. The Markye Chapel

The Side Chapel and Arcading in the South Aisle is said by Beattie to have been added to the Church in 1510. It is now known as the Markye Chapel, though as Duncumb pointed out, the Markye family did not begin its connection with Ross until 1603. On the south wall of the chapel is a monument, hardly legible now – a draped stone tablet with a cherub head dedicated to Elizabeth (Cecil) wife of William Markye, 1686. The Harleian manuscript of 1658 says that it was called “the Lord Greyes chapple” and that there was a window there with the arms of the Grey family. These were the Greys of Wilton Castle, just across the river. The Blount manuscript (1675), however, calls it the Mutton chapel, the Muttons (or Motons) being the ancient family which owned Alton Court before the Markeys.

At some point, the chapel fell out of use; certainly, the pew plan for 1862 shows the whole area, including the spot where the altar now stands given over to pews. Stratford suggests it was not used as a chapel for nearly a couple of centuries. There was a gallery over the whole area which can just be seen in a drawing made before the 1862

restoration, when it was removed. The last guidebook gives 1895 as the date when the chapel was re-fitted, but the brass memorial to Bishop John of Ross says that the sanctuary was restored to its former use in 1904.

The roof was heavily restored, along with all the others in the building, in 1878. It is, like the south aisle, a barrel ceiling of oak ribs and pitch pine boarding. Previously the rafters were bound together with collars and finished with circular-braced ribs sitting on ball flower cornices. In 1878 new ribs were fitted, made from salvaged material from the old nave roof. On the boarding of this chapel was once a repeating pattern in gold of Catherine wheels alternating with flaming stars.



The Markye Chapel in 1914 before the screen and War memorials were added

Now the altar is used for mid-week Communion services on Thursdays and for the 8 o'clock service on Sundays. The small light to its right indicates that the reserved sacrament is kept in the aumbry, which is the wall-safe behind the curtain. It is kept so that communion can be taken to the sick at any time, and as a reminder of the presence of Christ.

Behind the altar is a reredos of carved wood, whose provenance is at present unknown.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century this chapel has become the focal point for memorials to the two World Wars. The carved oak screen separating the chapel from the rest of the church is a memorial to those who died in the First World War. Along the top of it are eighteen badges mainly representing the regimental badges of that war.

Standing in the Nave, and looking south, left to right:

1. 7th Dragoon Guards	2. Wiltshire Regiment	3. Royal Fusiliers
4. Royal Artillery	5. (Marigold, symbol of BVM)	6. Lancashire Fusiliers
7. Royal London Fusiliers	8. Cheshire Regiment	9. (The Kyrle Motto)
10. Sherwood Foresters	11. Machine Gun Corps	12. Australian Imperial Force
13. Middlesex Regiment	14. ('M' emblem of BVM)	15. Army Service Corps
16. Royal Engineers (George V)	17. Border Regiment	18. East Surrey

Standing in the Markye Chapel and looking north, right to left:

1. Army Veterinary Corps	2. Royal Berkshire	3. Royal Flying Corps
4. Royal Pioneer Corps	5. Hereford Regiment	6. East Lancashire Regiment
7. Royal Warwickshire Regiment	8. South Lancs. Regt	9. (The Kyrle Crest)
10. Worcestershire Regiment	11. Shropshire Yeomanry	12. Gloucester Regiment
13. Kings Shropshire Light Inf'ry	14. Herefordshire Light Infantry	15. Welsh Regiment
16. Royal Welch Fusiliers	17. Royal Navy	18. South Wales Borderers

4 corbels at the end of each section of screen (west to east)

1. Prince of Wales Rifles	2. Anno Domini 1920	3. George V crest
4. 4 green men (inverted and incorporated into fleurs-de-Lys motives.		

Details of the windows in this chapel can be found in the appropriate chapter.

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## 5. The Windows

All the windows in Ross Church contain Victorian tracery; the original stonework was beyond repair by the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and many windows had lost their stonework with glass held in by iron bars. Thankfully, in every case, window tracery was designed to match the architecture surrounding it and in a few cases was an exact copy of the original. Equally, other than that in the east window, all glass is Victorian or later.

It is difficult to know what coloured glass was in the building before the Victorians. The Blount manuscript of 1675 gives us just:

In the church the windows are the arms of Thomas Cantilupe, Bishop of Hereford and those of the Church of Hereford; Also Argent [silver] a Lyon Rampant Gules; - A Fesse azure between 3 (blank) argent and – (blank)

The following section lists all the windows in the building, starting at the most important, the east window, and moving in a clockwise direction around the church. The majority of the contemporary photographs in this section are by John Chesham and Steve Betts and are used with his permission.

### 1. The East Window

**Date:** c1430 / 1873

**Glass:** stained, medieval

**Tracery:** 1873 – perpendicular style

**Subjects:** St Ethelbert, St Anne, St Joachim (parents of St Mary), St Thomas Cantilupe

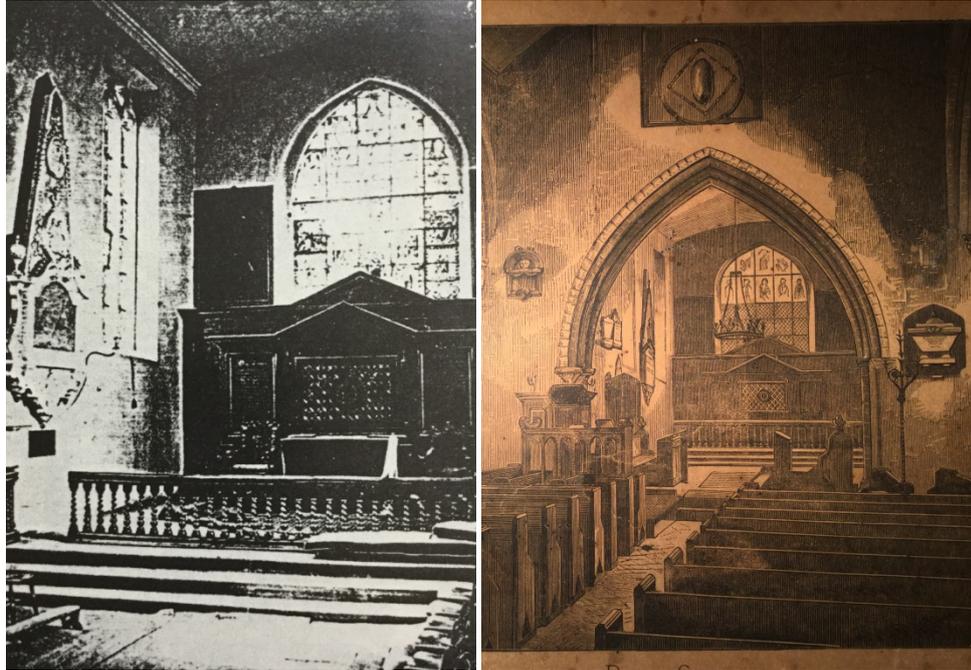
**Manufacturer:** unknown / Baillie and Miller

**Dedication:** Rev Dr Charles Ogilvie (Rector at the time of the restoration in 1873)

The East Window in the chancel is sometimes claimed to be the most precious possession of St. Mary's. It has been described by experts in stained glass as one of the most outstanding windows in Herefordshire.

Essentially it is the window given by Thomas Spofford, Bishop of Hereford between 1421 and 1448, for his chapel at Sugwas, near Breinton, in about 1430. In 1784 it was reported of the chapel that the “beauty of the stained glass was defaced” and in 1792 the chapel was demolished to make way for the building currently on the site, Sugwas Court. According to Ross accounts, the tracery in the East window of St Mary's had

decayed so badly by that time that the churchwardens placed iron rods as mullions in the window, and sent to Sugwas for the glass, which they heard was to be purchased cheaply. It came to Ross in wooden boxes and is said to have been fitted in between the iron rods just as it came out, although in the earliest printed account, of 1818, the figure of St Thomas is described. Extra glass would have been needed to fill the window and there are records of a depiction of John the Baptist having been in the window (presumably not a part of the original Sugwas window which only had four lights).



Left: A faded photograph of the "chancel windows some years before restoration" show the Spofford glass as it was originally inserted and prior to restoration in 1873 (British Library)

Right: an engraving sometime between 1862 and 1873 showing a similar but slightly different arrangement of the glass.

George Strong, in his "Handbook to Ross and Archenfield" (1863) gives the order of the glass differently from today, with an additional panel featuring John the Baptist.

No. 1. On the N. St. Joachym, the right hand upraised, holds a book in the left.

No. II. A King crowned, robed in ermine, in one hand a sceptre, in the other, a church; perhaps allusive to Edmond Ironsides, a munificent benefactor (see Ross Manor.)

No. III. St. Anne teaching the Blessed Virgin (to whom the Church is dedicated) to read. She has a crown and glory. Beside them is a Bishop

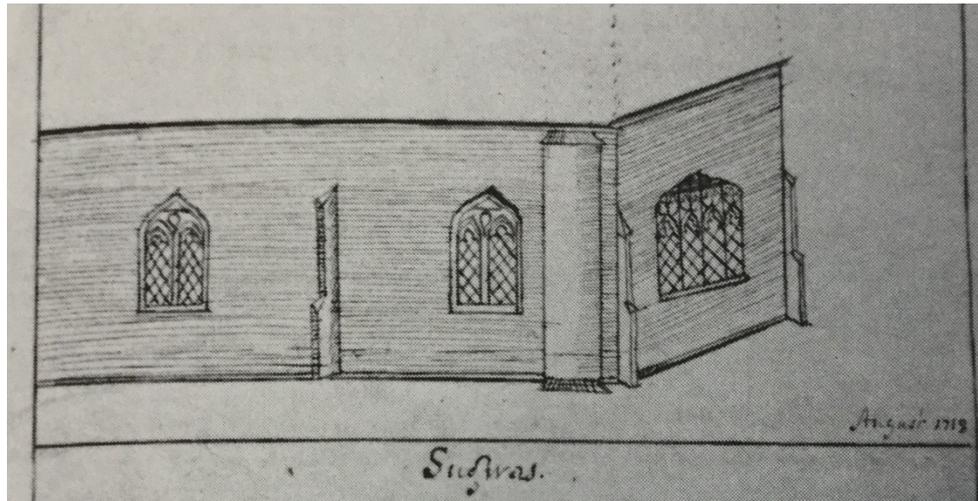
kneeling, with mitre, staff, and ring, and holding up a heart with both hands. The superscription is Hoc pre cor oblatum cor suscipe terge reatum, a Leonine hexameter verse of rhyming Latin, which may be thus rendered: This is my prayer: take this offered heart, wash away my guilt."

No. IV. ST. THOMAS DE CANTELUPE, Bishop of Hereford, whose shrine in Hereford Cathedral was formerly visited by Pilgrims and travellers from most parts of Europe, and contemplated with extraordinary reverence here. Besides his mitre, crosier and ring, he is identified by a label bearing Scs. THOMAS HEREFORDESIS.

No. V. ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST clothed from head to foot in a rough camel's hair garment, the camel's head trailing on the ground. The Agnus Dei with cross near his right foot. The three centre pieces are canopied.

In 1873 the glass was skilfully restored by Thomas Baillie and George Mayor of the London glass studio Thomas Baillie & co, who were in the area working on glass in the Mynors Chapel at Treago near St Weonards. The restoration was carried out as a memorial to Charles Ogilvie, a former Rector. An inscription can be found that effect at the bottom of the window.

The window today is a mixture of medieval glass and Victorian. The most important elements of the Spofford glass remain: all the faces of the main characters, much of their clothing, two - the inner two - of the four angels at the bottom of the four main lights and enough of the canopies for us to know that this is how they would have been. We also know from two independent accounts of the chapel dating from the eighteenth century that the window we have today is in the same order as it appeared in the chapel. These two accounts also dispel the legend that the window originally had five panels, a legend which was repeated as fact in twentieth century guidebooks to St Mary's.



A drawing by James Hill of the Sugwas Chapel in 1718 clearly shows an east window of 4 lights (Hereford Library)

The four lights in the chapel would have been wider and shorter than here at Ross. The two accounts of the glass in the chapel record mitred initials around the borders, there was not room for these in Ross, though one fragment, with the initials "TS" can be seen in the window at the back of the south aisle (more of that below).

There are four main lights with figures, and there is no doubt that the one on the right represents a previous bishop of Hereford, the sainted Thomas Cantilupe. As for the others, there has been much guesswork, resulting in mistakes and disagreements. Accounts from as far back as 1650 and 1718 were already disagreeing over the characters depicted. The dust has now pretty much settled on the debate, however, and it is now generally agreed to be as follows:



The first light (left) shows a king, with halo, crown and sceptre, and holding the model of a church. The restorers of 1873 labelled him as the king and saint, Edward the Confessor, but within ten years their mistake had been recognised, and all are now agreed that this is, Ethelbert, King of the East Angles, murdered in 794 and one of the two patron saints of Hereford Cathedral. Ethelbert's shrine is in Hereford Cathedral and

this was a major draw for pilgrims throughout the middle ages. He is indeed an appropriate figure for the bishop to have in his chapel.

**The second light** shows a child seated on its mother's knee with a robed bishop kneeling at their feet. The child is holding an open book, open away from them both, for the world to read, and this symbol was sometimes used to indicate that the child is the Word of God. This has led many to assume that the child is Jesus and the parent the Virgin Mary. It is now generally acknowledged that the parent is St Anne and the child the Virgin Mary. Mary and Anne were Bishop Spofford's favourite saints and so it is highly likely that the kneeling bishop, offering his heart to the pair, is in fact Spofford, the donor of the window. A very similar depiction of the three subjects appears in the east window at Ludlow Parish Church dating from around 1445. The label says: "Hoc precor oblatum cor suscipe terge reatum" (I pray you support this offered heart - cleanse its accursed state).

The label (original) on **the third light** is "Joachim virgini dans esse et hoc miraculum de radice Jesse." Joachim was the father of the Virgin Mary and there is a certain symmetry here with the two inner lights representing the two parents of Jesus. and this may well represent him. The significance of the book he holds, the strange cap, and the absence of the soup-plate of sanctity behind his head have not been explained; nor has his importance to Hereford and Bishop Spofford.

St Thomas of Hereford (Thomas Cantilupe) is featured in **the fourth light**. He is robed, with a crozier in his left hand, and his right hand raised in blessing. Once he became Bishop of Hereford in 1275, Thomas took to an ascetic and vigorous life as a campaigner for what is right. His campaigns brought him into conflict with the Archbishop of Canterbury, and he is thought to be the only Saint who died excommunicated. He died in 1282 and by 1320 had been canonised; his tomb helped Hereford become one of the great centres of medieval pilgrimage.

Below the figures in the four main lights is a further range of triple canopies, and under them half figures of angels. The two angels in the centre lights are 15<sup>th</sup> Century, the outer ones Victorian.

All the glass in the 14 sections of tracery at the top of the window, above the main lights, is Victorian, by Baillie and Miller (1873).

The western-most window in the south aisle (over the clergy vestry) contains many fragments of medieval glass thought to be from the same source at Sugwas, though not necessarily from the same window. See below.

## 2. Sanctuary, south wall, eastern most window

**Date:** c1870

**Glass:** clear – diamond leaded

**Tracery:** c1870 – perpendicular style – square headed

## 3. Chancel, south wall, window by the organ

**Date:** 1894

**Glass:** stained

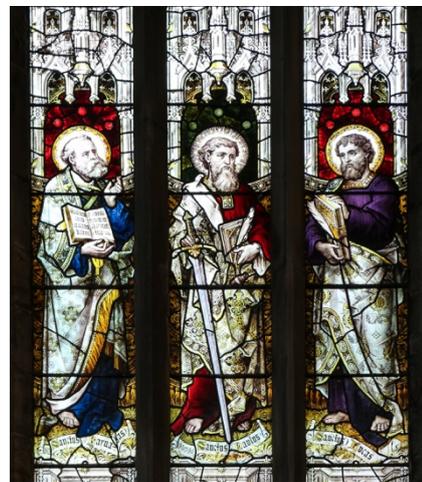
**Tracery:** c1870 – perpendicular – square headed

**Subjects:** St Luke, St Paul, St Barnabas

**Manufacturer:** ?

**Dedication:** Revd RH Cobbold – Rector

This window was erected by public subscription in memory of the previous Rector, RH Cobbold. It was unveiled at a special service on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 1894. Stratford had a detailed report of the window from the Ross Gazette.



## 4. Chancel Arch Windows – east wall of the nave

There are two small quatrefoil windows high above the chancel arch in the east wall of the nave. The one on the left represents the Blessed Virgin Mary, standing on her own.



Most unusually, it is in the arms of his father Joseph that the young Jesus is shown, in the right-hand window. A third central window, above, contains plain glass.

## 5. South Aisle, east wall – “Rudhall” Window

The window immediately behind the monuments now contains no glass or tracery. It was removed very soon after the organ chamber was built in 1873 when it was immediately found that the glass was acoustically detrimental to the new position of the organ. It contained crests and emblems of the Rudhall family (probably installed around the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) and according to contemporary accounts was to have been used in one of the new windows (not visible from the inside) in the organ chamber. Other accounts talk of it going into storage for future use. In any event, the glass seems to have been lost. There’s an illustration of it in the section on the monuments. Faculty of 1873: “Removing glass from Rudhall window in Chancel [?] and using the same as far as practicable in the window intended to be placed in the wall of the said organ chamber.

## 6. Markye Chapel – east window

**Date:** 1901 (faculty dated 1904)

**Glass:** stained glass

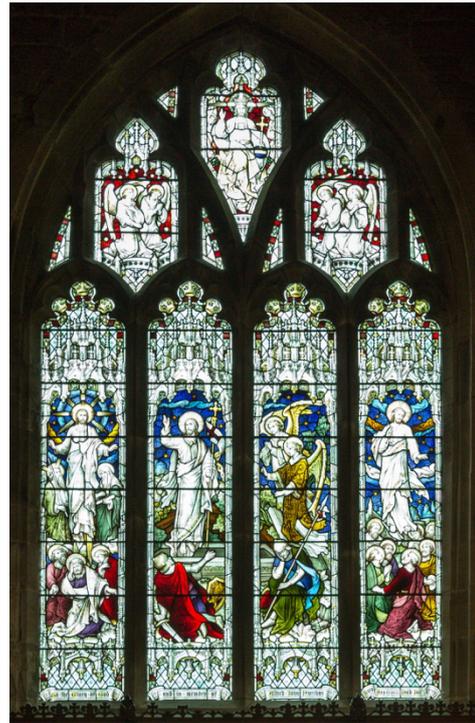
**Tracery:** 1878? – perpendicular style – a copy of the original design

**Subjects:** Transfiguration, Resurrection, Ascension

**Manufacturer:** ?

**Dedication:** Alfred John Purchas - 1901

The two central lights show Christ risen from the tomb on Easter Day. The light to the left shows the Transfiguration and the one to the right the Ascension. This window is a memorial to Alfred John Purchas, who died in 1901 it was paid for by Hannah Edith Purchase. Stratford considers this “the best window in the building” and an “exact *facsimile* of the old one” – presumably he means the tracery which is completely right for the 1510 date of this part of the building.



## 7. Markye Chapel – south wall – easternmost window

**Date:** 1883

**Glass:** stained glass

**Tracery:** 1883 – perpendicular style

**Subjects:** Jesus blessing children, the Sermon on the Mount

**Manufacturer:** ?

**Dedication:** Thomas Whittlesey (d 1873) and Jane (d 1866) Purchas



## 8. Markye Chapel – south wall central window

**Date:** 1900

**Glass:** stained glass

**Tracery:** 1883 – perpendicular style

**Subjects:** Dorcas Window (Charity)

**Manufacturer:** Heaton Butler & Bayne

**Dedication:** Ellen Bernard (1819 - 1898)

A fine Dorcas window in admirable colours, a memorial to Miss Ellen Bernard. She had lived at Over-ross and was active in the church and an increasingly generous benefactor from at least 1862 through to the end of her life. The window was erected by public subscription in 1900, and the work was done by Heaton Butler & Bayne of Garrick Street London at a cost of £66



## 9. Markye Chapel – south wall – westernmost window

**Date:** 1889  
**Glass:** mostly plain  
**Tracery:** 1883 – perpendicular style  
**Subjects:** two coats of arms  
**Manufacturer:**  
**Dedication:** Captain MKM Power

This window has mostly plain glass, but contains two different coats of arms, each with the inscription: “ANGELIS SUIS PRAECIPIET DE TE” (His angels have charge concerning you). Installed in December 1889, the glass was given by Mrs Power in memory of Capt. MKM Power of Hill Court who died on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1888.

## 10. South Porch windows

There is an internal window high up on the back wall of the Markye Chapel that looks out for the room above the South Porch, previously known as the Parvis. This was one of the discoveries in the 1878 restoration.

The south window up in the Parvis was remade (replacing an “unsightly” one) during the 1878 restoration.

## 11. South Aisle – window on south wall in clergy vestry

**Date:** 1876  
**Glass:** some medieval - mixed  
**Tracery:** 1886 – Decorated style (replaced Early English one)  
**Manufacturer:** probably Baillie and Mayer  
**Dedication:** -

The two main lights of this window are probably by Baillie and Mayer, the restorers of the east window in 1873. They incorporate flowers, crosses and other sacred monograms based on 15<sup>th</sup> Century art.

The five small lights above are filled with fragments of glass, some of it 19<sup>th</sup> century but there are also fragments believed to be 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Century. Some of this medieval glass is Thomas Spofford glass from the Sugwas chapel (see east window above). Particularly obvious are fragments of the border incorporating the initials TS, fragments

of faces and drapery from clothing, a hand holding a sceptre or staff, a bishop's mitre, a woman's head and hands ...

## 12. South Aisle – west window

Date:  
Glass:  
Tracery:

## 13. West Window (choir vestry – tower)

**Date:** 1869  
**Glass:** stained glass  
**Tracery:** 1862 – by public subscription  
**Subjects:** key scenes from the life of Christ  
**Manufacturer:** probably Clayton and Bell  
**Dedication:** “In Memoriam” the Misses Jones of Merrivale.

This window has been referred to in the past as “the Ladies’ Window,” presumably referring to the Misses Jones of its dedication. It is mentioned in the account of the 1862 restoration after consideration was given to restoring it once the organ gallery and organ had been removed from the tower (see appendix 2).

Much of the drawing style and e.g., the lettering of *Ecce Agnus Dei* in the second light is standard Clayton and Bell. The striking figure of the resurrected Christ is most probably by George Daniels who did a huge amount of cartooning for Clayton and Bell from the 1870s onwards. (*Information supplied by Alan Brook, Architectural and Art Historian.*)



## 14. North Aisle – west window

**Date:** c1865

**Glass:** plain glass – diamond leaded

**Tracery:** c1865 – Decorated geometric design

## 15. North Aisle – north wall, west

**Date:** c1865

**Glass:** plain glass – diamond leaded

**Tracery:** c1870 “through the kindness of Miss MS Hall & Miss Ogilvie” - Stratford

## 16. North Aisle – north wall, east of north door

**Date:** 1867

**Glass:** plain glass – diamond leaded

**Tracery:** c1865 “through the kindness of Miss MS Hall & Miss Ogilvie” - Stratford

**Subjects:** The Good Samaritan

**Manufacturer:**

**Dedication:** William Cary Cocks

The glass in this window was paid for by public subscription. The main scenes are of the parable of the Good Samaritan, with two smaller panels below depicting charity and blessing (?)

In 2017 the glass in this window was swapped with that in the one on the other side of the north door, so that the stained glass should not be lost in the toilets.



## 17. North Aisle – north wall, central

**Date:** c1870

**Glass:** plain glass – diamond leaded

**Tracery:** c1870 “through the kindness of Miss MS Hall & Miss Ogilvie” - Stratford

## 18. North Aisle – north wall, east end

**Date:** 1927 (faculty 1931)

**Glass:** stained glass

**Tracery:** c1870 “through the kindness of Miss MS Hall & Miss Ogilvie” - Stratford

**Subjects:** St George & the dragon, one other figure with a crown, sword and a green cross, possibly St Oswald.

**Manufacturer:** CH Kempe Studios (designer: Mr Tower)

**Dedication:** Colonel Oswald Robert Middleton DL, JP

This is one of two Kemp windows in the church (the other is above the chancel door). Pevsner describes them as “dull”. Charles Eamer Kemp was the most prolific of Victorian glass designers and manufactures and work from his studios can be found all over the world. This window was made after his death (1907); his firm continued until 1934. The Kemp style is pretty recognisable but also so by the wheatsheaf that he included in most of his windows (in the case of our two windows – in the bottom left corner) The black tower on top of the wheatsheaf indicates a window made after Kemp’s death. This, with the other Kemp Window in the chancel, is the most recent glass in the church.



## 19. North Aisle – east window

**Date:** 1878

**Glass:** plain glass – diamond leaded

**Tracery:** 1878 – designed by Thomas Nicholson – decorated, geometric design

This window is affectionately known as the “Kyrle Window,” this alludes to the story of the elm suckers which once grew in this part of the church, supposedly in the place where John Kyrle sat. The impressive Decorated, geometric tracery in this window was designed by Thomas Nicholson, Diocesan Architect, and installed as part of his overall scheme for the big 1878 restoration of the whole building. Note the carved capitals of the stonework and the carved foliage. It’s worth taking a look at the



outside of this window too where the label (the curved line of stone above the arch of the window) terminates in two elegant carved heads – a bishop and a queen.

## 20. Chancel – north wall, west

**Date:** c1870

**Glass:** plain glass – diamond leaded

**Tracery:** c1870 – perpendicular style – square headed

## 21. Chancel – north wall, centre

**Date:** 1926 (faculty dated 1929)

**Glass:** stained glass

**Tracery:** c1870 – perpendicular style – square headed

**Subjects:** Scenes from the nativity especially the visit of the Wise Men.

**Manufacturer:** CE Kempe & Co – London (under the supervision of Nicholson & Clarke, Architects, Hereford)

**Dedication:** The Holy Incarnation of our Lord & Rowland Tracey Ash Money-Kyrle M.A.

This is the “Money Kyrle window.” Rowland Tracey Ash Money-Kyrle was Archdeacon of Hereford from 1923 but also Rector of Ross from 1910 to 1926. This is another window from the studios of Messrs CE Kempe & Co of London, installed under the superintendence of Messrs Nicholson and Clarke, Architects, Hereford. Cost £300. Like the one at the north end of the north aisle this window dates from after the death of Kemp. The Money-Kyrle family is connected to John Kyrle and many monuments will be found to them at Much Marcle.



## 22. Chancel – north wall, east window

**Date:** c1870

**Glass:** plain glass – diamond leaded

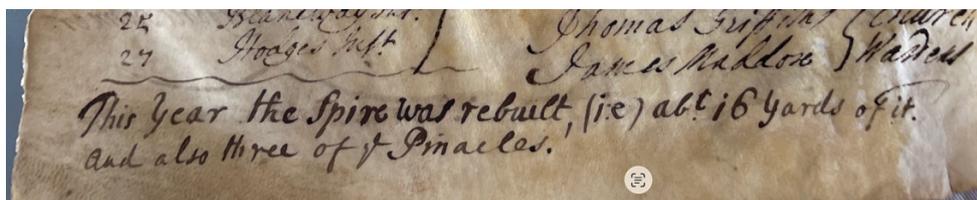
**Tracery:** c1870 – perpendicular style – square headed

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## 6. Tower, Spire and Bells

### Tower & Spire

The original spire (and the tower) date from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. It is believed that the spire was originally somewhat shorter and less elegant than the one we see today (which is around 205 feet from the base of the tower). In 1721 the greater part of the 14th century spire “abt. 16 yards of it and also three of ye pinnacles” (note in registers) was rebuilt, with the old materials, largely at the charge of John Kyrle, the "Man of Ross". It is possible that the work was carried out by Nathaniel “Spire Mender” Wilkinson (who is responsible for similar spires at Ledbury (1732), Slimbridge (1735), Mitcheldean (1740), Monmouth (1743) and St Andrews, Worcester (1751). If this is the case it would have been a very early project for him as he would only have been around 20 years old. Both his father and grandfather were stone masons too, so it is certainly possible and all these spires are extremely similar.



Parish registers of 1721 (now at HARC)

A note in the registers of 1790 gives us “this year the spire and tower underwent a thorough repair under the direction of Richard Goodman, architect of Lydney. The spire was taken down about 7 feet and raised something higher. A new weather cock was set upon it and the whole of the tower completely repointed. The expense of the whole amounted to about one hundred guineas.

At least half of it (about 50 feet) had to be rebuilt after it had been struck by lightning during a terrible storm in 1852, a newspaper report of the time tells us that the opportunity was taken to even out the scars caused by the heightening of the spire in the last two pieces of work.

Duncumb: This spire, shattered in a storm in 1852, and restored at a cost of £600, is ... a prominent ... object. Its height from the base of the tower to the top of the vane is 208 feet.

Further restoration work was needed in 1911.

In 1951 a Faculty was issued for dismantling the top 25 feet of the spire, and work was done in 1952 at the cost of £1,300.

There is a certain rumour that it was John Kyrle who had the four 25-foot pinnacles added to the corners of the tower, but this seems to be a misreading of the register note from that year which says three of them were rebuilt. Weathering had made the pinnacles dangerous by 1975, and one was rebuilt then before finance ran out. The other three were taken down and were replaced with new ones in the restoration of 1985.

JA Stratford gives us the following amusing story from 1896

Some years ago a cute trick was played by a couple of nomadic steeple jacks, who caused a scare by stating that they had discovered, on inspecting other churches, that the copper conductor, by being let into the capstone instead of being isolated and carried outside it, would be the means of conveying the electric fluid into the building instead of carrying it down to the outer earth. They suggested that such was the case here. Having obtained permission to inspect the summit, they borrowed all the ladders they could get hold of and attached them to the spire from tower to weathercock. During their temporary absence, however, a plucky individual ascended the ladders and examined the capstone. He found the conductor perfectly placed and that there was not the slightest danger. The steeplejacks then defiantly refused to take down the ladders (a difficult and dangerous work) until they were paid a pretty good sum – we think it was £10. As they were “masters of the situation” there was no alternative to make the best of the matter; so after a little haggling, they were paid off indignantly. It was afterwards found out that the “sell” had been successfully practised in other towns besides Ross.



Left: A view of the church from the south sometime in the late 1970s or early 1980s while three of the four pinnacles were missing. Right: Some slightly hair-raising stunts on the spire during the 1911 restoration when health and safety was clearly considered not as important as today.

## The Bells

Today the tower houses a ring of eight bells plus a Sanctus bell, although according to an inventory dated 27th May 1553 there was once a ring of five medieval bells ranging in diameter from 37 to 50 inches. It is interesting to note that the existing tenor has a diameter of about 50 inches.

The present-day ring of eight bells were all cast by Thomas Rudhall in Gloucester. Seven were cast in 1761. Prebendary Beattie's guide says that 'the tenor bell, weighing 24 cwt., was given by the "Man of Ross."' The 1984 guide says that 'the tenor weighing about 22cwt was cast in 1770 and given by John Kyrle.' In fact he gave it to the church in 1695, and 1770 is the year in which it had to be recast.

The bells are tuned in a major scale, the tenor being approximately D natural.

All the bells were re-hung during the 1984 restoration, and they had to be taken down again sometime between 1988 and 1990 because the old mediaeval oak beams would no longer take the strain.

The clock and quarter chimes were given by parishioners in 1924, in memory of John Kyrle, to commemorate the bicentenary of his death.

The Sanctus bell is hung in the north window, weighs just over 1 cwt. and has a diameter of 17 inches. Probably originally by John Palmer, it was recast in 1867 by Warners. It is hung in a similar fashion to the ringing peal but has neither stay nor slider. Its inscription reads:-

"Soli Detur: Gloria: I.H. 1635: I.P./recast/ 1867 J Warner & Son London"

The total weight of the ringing peal is just over 80 cwt. The oldest bell, the tenor, was given by John Kyrle in 1695 and was recast in 1770.

## Bell Details

Bell	Inscription	Weight/diameter
Treble	Sum: Rosa:Pulsata:Mundi: 1761	5 cwt - 2ft 6ins
No 2	Meriam:lvenes:Vocem:Tribuere:Puellae 1761	5 cwt - 2ft 7ins
No 3	Prosperity to all benefactors of Churches and Bells 1761	5 cwt - 2ft 8ins
No 4	God preserve the town of Ross & all good friends to us 1761	7 cwt - 2ft 11ins
No 5	God save the King 1761	9 cwt - 3ft 2ins
No 6	We wear all cast at Gloucester by the Rudhalls 1761. Recast 1977 J Taylor	11 cwt - 3ft 3ins
No 7	James Wellington & Thos:Thomas Churchwardens 1761	15 cwt - 3ft 9ins
Tenor	John Kyrle of Ross Esqr.: gave this bell: A.D.: 1695 recast 1770	20 cwt - 4ft 2ins

Pitch of tenor (Strike note) - 307.5Hz – 20/100 flat of E flat on International Standard pitch (A = 440Hz)

The original oak frame dated from 1881 and is by George Day and Sons of Eye, Suffolk. A major restoration of the framework and a rehang of the bells was started in 1984,

under guidance from Taylors, most of the work being done by local bell ringers and parishioners. The bells rang out again in time for Christmas 1986.

The tower is affiliated to the Hereford Diocesan Guild of Bell ringers and has been the venue for numerous peals and quarter peals for that and other Guilds. There are several peal boards displayed in the ringing chamber including the one dated February 11th 1851 which reads :-

February 11th 1851 was rung in this tower a true and complete peal of Grandsire Triples containing 5040 changes in three hours and two minutes by the Society of Ross Ringers being the first true peal ever rung in this county. The bells manned as follows

1 Humphrey Bird	5 Chas, Bullock Snr
2 William Bevan	6 Chas. Bullock Jnr
3 Henry Drew	7 John Gammon
4 Joseph Drew	8 Richard Carwadine

Conducted by Mr Chas. Bullock Snr. It is, however, doubtful that this was indeed the first peal because in the Gloucester Journal dated 29th December 1761 it was announced:-

It is, however, doubtful that this was indeed the first peal because in the Gloucester Journal dated 29th December 1761 it was announced:

December 26. This morning was rung at Rofs by the ringers there, a complete peal of Grandsire Triples of 5040 changes in three hours and twenty minutes, on a fine peal of new bells cast by Meffrs Tyler and Rudhall of this city.

Whichever was the first, there is no doubt that Ross bells have rung out over the centuries and still do so today for the greater glory of God.

The clock and quarter chimes were donated by the parishioners in 1924 to commemorate the bicentenary of the death of John Kyrle.

Bibliography: Sharp F. Church Bells of Herefordshire.



A fine body of men! The ringers sometime during the time of Revd Cobbold, 1873-93 (with two curates and a sextan) outside the old Rectory. The picture is on the wall in the ringing chamber.

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## 7 The Rudhall Monuments

### The Rudhall Family

Several generations of the family lived on a property called Rudhall, two and a half miles from the centre of Ross, which came into the hands of Nicholas Rudhall in 1411. The Tudor mansion was largely the work of William Rudhall who died in 1530 (monument 1). It still stands, exactly where the present-day parishes of Ross, Brampton Abbots and Weston-under-Penyard meet (though for most of the time covered by the monuments in St Mary's Weston under Penyard and Brampton Abbots were all a part of the parish of Ross). The last in the direct male line was Colonel William Rudhall who died in 1651.



Rudhall Manor in about 1750. The chapel is on the right hand side (the west corner).

### The Rudhall Chapel (in St Mary's)

According to Duncumb, this chapel was erected at the end of the south aisle early in the 14th century, by John de Ross, a native of the parish, a canon residentiary of Hereford and Archdeacon of Salop, who, travelling to Rome, found such favour with the Sovereign Pontiff that he was appointed "Sacri Palatii Custos", and in 1324 was "thrust into the Bishoprick of Carlisle without the ceremony of election", and presided over that diocese until his decease in 1331. He obtained in 1307 a royal licence to endow a chantry in this chapel with seventy acres in Ross and Walford.

Another chantry in this chapel was appropriated to a fraternity occupying a small hospice in the town, dedicated to the memories of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Thomas the Martyr.

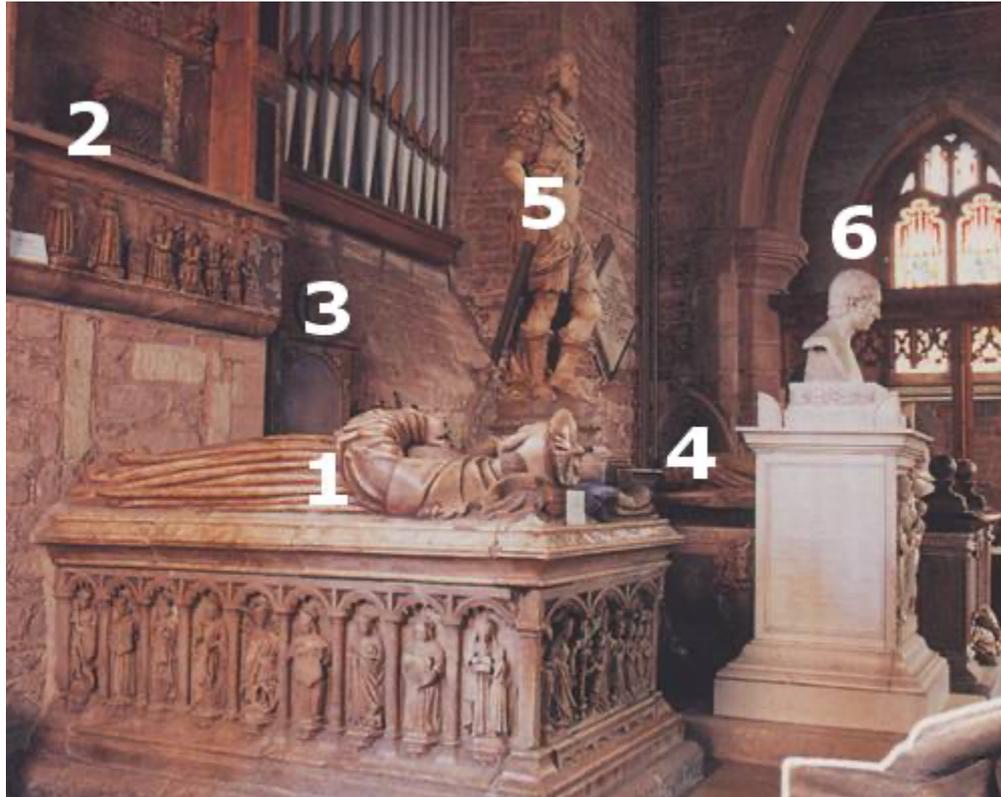
In 1377, "on account of the exhaustion of the lands owing to the malevolence of intruders and the diminution of husbandmen occasioned by the recent plague, Bishop Gilbert united these chantries, in order that the joint income might furnish sufficient support for one priest, who might celebrate masses for the souls of the founders of each".

Serjeant Rudhale and his eldest son having died before the suppression of religious foundations without giving testamentary directions as to a place of burial, the right of interment in this chapel must have been obtained in their lifetime, for the services of the chantries continued during several years after their deaths. (Though see below.)`

The ornate details of the earliest monument suggest its preparation in the pre-Reformation period and during the minority of some of the children. The purchase of the lands belonging to the chantries after the suppression of religious foundations secured the exclusive use of the site and also its modern designation, for the owners of the Rudhall estate.

## The Monuments – location

The notes on the monuments below are in the following order (by date of death).



The Rudhall monuments are a fine collection, representing interesting stages in the development of monumental sculpture. **It is a shame that they have been bundled onto a platform too small to allow proper appreciation of the carving**, but one should not carp - at least they have survived, with little damage, considering their age.

Letter from Mrs Jane Kelsall of St Albans AL1 3QQ - 9th June 1995

If Duncumb is right about the chantry chapel, each successive generation of Rudhalls would have had to fit its monument into the remaining and always limited space. Whether or not they were 'bundled together' later, or by anyone else is still open to debate.

Interestingly though, a partial answer to this may rest in a couple of manuscripts from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. The earliest, by Silas Taylor of 1658 (quoted by Fosbroke) lists only monuments 2 (interestingly with no reference to the missing figures), 4 and 5 (in that order). It seems very significant that he doesn't mention the earliest, most elaborate and most obvious monument to William (d1530) and Ann (1). And is the order of those mentioned is different from that we see today? It's difficult to know.

On the south side of the church are the monuments of the Rudhalls of Rudhall in this parish, of which there be divers.

First is of **William Rudhall and his wife Margaret**, the daughter of Sir James Croft, temp. reign. Elizab. With these engravings ... [he goes on to describe the heraldry in detail]

Next to William is the tombe of **John Rudhall the sonne of William, who married the lady Cholke**, with her effigies alsoe though alive.

Next to these is a **statue erect in armour of William brother to John** last mentioned, who both died leaving no issue from them to succeed them, and so, the estate came to be divided amongst the children of the sisters of William and John, who had married into these families, the Pies, Westfalings, Broughtons, Prices, Auberys and Morgans.

*Harleian Manuscript (Silas Taylor) - 1658*

The second manuscript is from a *History of Herefordshire* by Thomas Blount written in 1675. He begins:

In Rudhall Chapel there is a fair tomb of William Rudhale serjant at Law, and his wife with this inscription "William Rudhall, gent Serjeant at Law, who slleps near-by great grandson, via margaret, daughter of that famous man james Croft ...

He seems to have mistranslated the Latin inscription and confused son / father and who exactly was the "serjeant at law" but it's clearly the wall tablet of William and Margaret (2) not the toom of William and Anne (1) that he is describing. He goes on to list all the other monuments except for that of William and Anne.

To this needs to be added the question of why the oldest of the monuments – a very fine piece of work – has no end (the figures have no feet) and the whole thing seems to disappear into the wall. There is no clear reason for it being like this – there is (and presumably was) plenty of space for the whole thing.

There is also an ugly row of bricks on the top of the monument between the two figures; a tomb of this quality would surely not have been made like that?

The 1658 and 1675 manuscripts raise as many questions as they provide potential answers, not least, where was the monument to William and Anne if was not in the church? Is it significant that Rudhall Manor is very much on the border of three modern

parishes (William's father was buried at Brampton Abbots)? Maybe it was elsewhere in the church (but Silas Taylor doesn't mention it). More research is needed but one possible answer is outlined below.

## 1. William Rudhall (died 1530) and his wife Anne (Milborne)

This William was the most famous of the Rudhalls, in that he served as Attorney-General to Arthur, Prince of Wales, the first son of King Henry VII. (Catherine of Aragon was first married to this Prince Arthur, and when he died his brother, Henry VIII, was given dispensation by the Pope to marry her). It was the annulment of this marriage that led to the establishment of the Church of England.) His wife Anne was a daughter of Simon Milborne of Tillington. For more on William see the 2023 detailed article by Simon Payling. <https://thehistoryofparliament.wordpress.com/2023/07/13/the-tomb-of-william-rudhale-d-1530-queen-katherines-attorney-general-in-the-church-of-ross-on-wye/>

Their alabaster tomb, just to the right of the chancel arch, is worth studying as a work of art. It is so fine that it must surely have come from the renowned Nottingham workshop, near the alabaster quarries in Derbyshire. The tombs from these craftsmen are usually chests without canopies, and with recumbent effigies whose hands are joined in prayer. Often the figures carved on the sides of the chest are children, in high relief. Those who died before their parents hold skulls. It would have been carved in Nottingham and brought over the rough tracks on pack horses, for its panels to be fitted together at Ross (or wherever it first stood!)

The two effigies rest side by side. He is dressed as a Sergeant-at-Law, and she wears the pedimental head-dress of her time, and has a purse attached to her girdle. His head rests on a helm; hers on a cushion, supported by two angels. Traces of colour can still be seen on his robes. They lie recumbent on their chest-tomb, which has a moulded base and cornice. The bays, nine on each long side and three to the west, have all a cinque-foiled head and are generally divided by shafts.

The bays on the north side, beginning with that nearest the wall, contain:

1. St. George and the dragon;
2. Angel with shield;

3. St. Edward the Confessor, with ring;
4. Duncumb simply says "a nun with book and beads", but Beattie identifies her as "St. Zita or Sitha, with the flowering loaf"; She lived from 1218-1272, and from the age of 12 was a serving-maid in a great household at Lucca, in Italy. Often misunderstood and criticised by her employers, she eventually won their respect through her persevering devotion and religious fervour. The story is told of one occasion when she was asked by the cook to watch the oven in which the bread was baking. She was saying her rosary, which is represented here, and forgot the bread. On suddenly remembering, she ran to the oven, to find an angel guarding the bread, which was all beautifully baked, except for one loaf. This the angel touched, and it immediately burst into flower like a rose. The loaf which the figure is holding in her left hand is shaped like a cottage loaf of today. Prebendary Beattie said that in his time loaves were still sometimes marked with a flower, reflecting unawares the one-time popularity of this story. He took this figure of St. Zita as evidence that the Rudhalls remembered their servants in their prayers.
5. St Michael the Archangel, slaying the four-headed dragon (Beattie), or according to Duncumb, slaying Pride, a six-headed monster;
6. An angel holding a shield;
7. St. Catherine, with the wheel, the patron saint of the family;
8. An angel with a shield;
9. St. Anne teaching her daughter, the Blessed Virgin Mary, to read.

The bays on the south side, beginning with that nearest the wall, contain:

1. St. Paul, with the sword;
2. An angel with shield;
3. St. John the Baptist, with the Lamb;
4. The Blessed Trinity, with the Father seated, the Son on the Cross between his knees, and the dove of the Holy Spirit on his heart;
5. William and Anne Rudhall and nine children are kneeling in adoration, with the family escutcheon or achievement between them and the object of their devotion, identified by Duncumb as the Holy Trinity;

6. Continuation of 5 above
7. St. John the Evangelist, with the chalice;
8. An angel with shield;
9. St. Peter, with the Key.

The bays on the west side represent the family worshipping before an unusual scene of the Annunciation. The angel Gabriel kneels before the Blessed Virgin, who is also kneeling before a faldstool on which rests an open book. Between them, and touched by each, is a scroll without inscription. From a vase there springs a lily of purity, and above it the dove of the Holy Spirit leads the Babe in a cloud from heaven. Here, strangely, there are only seven children kneeling with William and Anne.

Mrs Kelsall writes:

At the head of the tomb there is a bas relief showing the Annunciation, with the Angel Gabriel arriving head-first from heaven with the Holy Spirit, shown as a dove. The Virgin is reading at a desk with a vase of lilies beside her. She is listening to the Angel Gabriel's news but has not yet appreciated its significance as her book is still open. She seems remarkably calm, given his precipitous arrival. In representations of this scene, when the book is closed, this tells us that she has accepted her fate. On the right of the Virgin are William and Ann Rudhall with their seven (?) children. At first glance, this may seem an absurd piece of vanity, that this family present themselves as having been present at this momentous event, with the presumption to 'put themselves in the picture' but we must not judge with modern eyes. On consideration we must see it as an affirmation by this family of their firm belief in the Virgin birth.

The question of whether or not all these monuments were originally placed here is still a live one. As discussed above, it does now seem to centre around this one (not mentioned in two later 17<sup>th</sup> Century manuscripts otherwise containing detailed information on these monuments). If not here then, where was it?

Could it, perhaps have started out at Rudhall Manor itself? There was a chapel (dedicated to St Catherine) at Rudhall, we know that from Duncumb, it was converted for domestic use by Thomas Westfaling (monument 6) – he lived there from 1791-1814, so the dates fit. Additionally, our William was responsible for a major expansion of Rudhall Manor, it therefore seems a good resting place for him. We also know from Duncombe (p171):

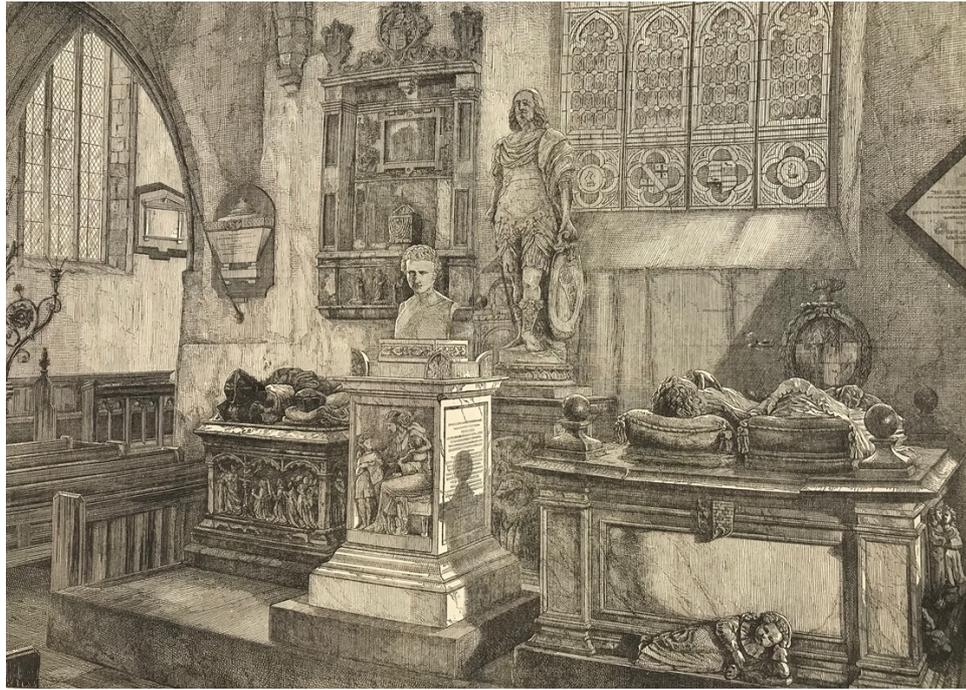
For a long period subsequent to the suppression of religious houses, divine service was celebrated in this apartment by the minister of Brampton, to whom all alterage fees were paid, though Easter offerings were given to the rectors of Ross in respect of the sittings in that church.

There would, by the time Thomas Westfaling wanted to clear the chapel at Rudhall Manor, already have been 4 monuments here in the Rudhall chapel at Ross, and this would seem a very obvious place to relocate it. But this remains an undocumented theory at present!

## 2. William Rudhall (died 1609) and his wife Margaret (Croft)

Above the alabaster altar-tomb of 1530 is a black marble and alabaster wall monument with recess, side pilasters, cornice and two shields of arms. William is the great grandson of William and Anne (1) and the father of all the Rudhalls commemorated in all the other monuments (3, 4, 5). Below this recess are the kneeling figures of the two sons and seven daughters (the surviving children) of William and Margaret Rudhall, dressed in the clothing of the period. Eight children who died prematurely are recorded on the monument (3) to the right.

Unfortunately, the main figures of William and Margaret are both missing, the nineteenth century accounts and illustrations we have also have them as missing. The Silas Taylor manuscript of 1658 and Thomas Blount in 1675 do not mention the figures at all. Neither source goes into much detail on any of the monuments except for coats of arms and inscriptions and it seems more likely that they would have commented on the figures had they been missing than present, but this is conjecture. In any event, they ought to be seen in the recess, kneeling opposite each other.



The presence of the glass in the window suggests this wonderfully observed drawing predates the building of the organ chamber in 1873. We can also see pews and lighting from the 1862 restoration, though - oddly - the few short pews that were inserted in 1862, in front of the monuments are not there (artistic license?) The glass in the window included the Rudhall family crests and is, as far as we know, now lost.

It was probably this William Rudhall (died 1609) who was the restorer of the 14<sup>th</sup> century Rudhall Alms-houses in Church Street, just outside the churchyard.

Duncumb / Cooke (1882) describes the wall monument thus:

ARMS: or, on a bend az. three Catherine wheels arg. Rudhale quartering;  
 1, gu. a chev. between 3 escallops arg. Milborne;  
 2, or fretty, gules plate, Verdon;  
 3, arg. a bend between 6 martlets gul. Furnival;  
 4, gules, a fesse componée, an annulet for difference, Whittington;  
 5, gul. a fret ermine, Hyndford;  
 6, arg. a chev. gul. between 3 hurts, Baskerville;  
 7, az. a lion ramp. arg. armed and langued ppr. Lovetot;  
 8, sab. a bend between 6 crosses croset fitch, e or, Blacket;  
 9, sab. a cross engrailed between 4 nails arg. Marbury;  
 10, arg. 3 bars wavy az.; 11, sab. 3 swans 2 and 1 arg.  
 CREST: a dexter hand, couped at wrist, grasping a bunch of roses and tulips.

A slate slab bears the inscription:

GULIELMUS RUDHALE, ARMIGER, SERVIENTIS AD LEGEM  
 QUI PROPTER DORMIT PRO NEPOS, EX MARGARETA FILIA  
 VIRI CLARISSIMI IACOBI CROFT MILITIS, REGINAE ELIZABETHAE

E SECRETORIBUS CONSILIIS ET HOSPITII SUI CONTRAROTULARII,  
 QVATVOR FILIOS ET TREDECIM FILIAS SUSCEPIT, FILIOS DUOS  
 ET FILIAS SEPTEM RELIQUIT SUPERSTITES. FIDE IN DEUM,  
 AMORE IN VERBO DIVINI MAGISTRI, CHARITATE IN PATRIAM,  
 BENEFICENTIA IN PAUPERES, AEQUITATE IN OMNES SINGULARI,  
 VITAM EGIT PIE, PEREGIT TRANQUILLE 21 AUG 1609  
 AETATIS SVAE ANNO 55  
 BEATI MORTUI QUI IN DYO MORIUNT

William Rudhall, Esquire, great grandson of the Sergeant at Law [monument 1 – William d 1530] who lies near here, via Margaret, daughter of that famous man James Croft, knight, controller to the secretariat and household Queen Elizabeth. He begot 4 sons and 13 daughters and left 2 sons and 7 daughters surviving. He passed this life trusting in God, well disposed to the ministers of the divine word, loving his country, charitable to the poor, just to one and all, and died peacefully on 21st August 1609, aged 55.

### 3. Richard and others of William & Margaret's children who died young

An alabaster round-headed tablet with Shield of Arms (the three wheels, which may be associated with the wheel of St Catherine on the earliest tomb) will be seen fixed to the wall, below and a little to the right of that of William and Margaret Rudhall (2). This is a memorial to eight of William and Margaret's children who died young. Thomas Blount gives a good translation of the Latin on this tablet:

Besides those still surviving, they also begot eight other children who died prematurely (very dear):

His first born and eldest son, **Lord Richard Rudhall**, who, knighted at the victory of Cadiz and at another expedition to the islands, met his death aged 24 and is buried at Plymouth.

**Gilbert**, a youth of great expectations, dies aged 17 at London

The remaining six, **Jocosa (Joyce), Joan, Ursula, Margaret and two Alices** died early in infancy.

PRAETER  
 HOS IAM SVPERSTITES  
 LIBEROS SVSCEPERVNT  
 ETIAM OCTO ALIOS, PRAE  
 MATVRA MORTE PEREMPTOS:  
 PRIMOGENITVM SVVM CHARISSI=  
 MVMQUE FILIVM DNM RICHARDVM  
 RVDHALE QVI GADITANA  
 VICTORIA EQVES CREATVS ET

ALTERA AD INSULAS EXPEDI=  
TIONE 24o AETATIS SVAE ANNO  
FATO FUNCTUS, PLIMOTHIAE  
REQUIESCIT GILBERTUS OPTIMAE  
SPEI ADOLESCENS 17o ANNO  
AETATIS SVAE LONDINI MOR=  
TVVS EST RELIQVAE SEX IOCASA  
IOANNA VRSVLA MARGARETA  
& DVAE ALICIAE PRIMA INFANTA  
OBIERVNT

#### 4. John Rudhall (died 1636) and his wife Mary (Pitt)

This is an altar-tomb of alabaster with panelled sides and angle pilasters. John was the eldest surviving son and heir of William & Margaret (2)

On the tomb lie recumbent the effigies of William John Rudhall and his wife Mary. He is clad in armour and is holding his wife's left hand. He has a profusion of curls, breeches worked with lace, and open Spanish boots. She is in rich clothing of the Stuart period. Her right hand is placed on his breast. At her feet is a pelican preening itself, and at his feet a crest - a hand grasping roses.

On the north side are the family coat of arms and the kneeling figures of two daughters; on the south side, the kneeling figure of a daughter and that of a swaddled infant resting on a skull, and a cartouche or scroll of arms; on the west side, the recumbent figure of a daughter, with skull, and above, a shield of arms. All these children evidently died in infancy.

Round the margin is inscribed:

S.M. Joh. Rudhale de Rudhall arm Gulmi filii; qui obiit xxix die Marcii A.D. 1636 sepultus hic jacet. In cujus piam memoriam clarissima ejus uxor Maria Gulielmi Pitt de Hartle &c. militis Filia tumulum hunc M sta posuit.

Eheu sistas Viator paululum  
Cinis vicinus et manes rogant  
Iohannis enim haec (quem cernis) tegit  
Rudhalli terra quod caelis abest  
Quem si prius fuisse noveris  
Et familia perantiqua, simul

Ac moribus vitae integerrimum,  
Famaeque patriae, iuxta ac bonis

Amabilem amantemque tum bonis  
Desideratum, plurimum suis:  
Abire possis hinc in rem tuam.

Freely translated into English, this inscription reads:

Ah, passer-by, please pause here a while! The ashes and the departed soul nearby ask this of you. For the man you see buried beneath this earth is John Rudhall, now in heaven. If you will but note that erstwhile, he was a man distinguished by his ancient ancestry and by the quality of his own life and family renown; if you but note that he was lovable and loving to all good people, and likewise missed by good people, especially those close to him; if you note all this, then you may go about your business.

A translation of the inscription round the margin might be:

Sacred to the Memory of John Rudhall of Rudhall, Esquire, the son of William, who died on the 29th March 1636 and lies buried here. In dutiful memory of him his most excellent wife Mary, daughter of Sir William Pitt of Hartle ..., in mourning set up this memorial.

Katharine Esdaile, in the book *English Church Monuments 1510 to 1840* (1946) has the following to say of this particular monument:

... the finest group of monuments in the country by one hand, those at Much Marcle [Sir John and Lady Kyrle - 1633], ..., **Ross-on-Wye**, ... are the work of an artist trained in heraldry. ... What has been overlooked, however, is that the artist was also trained in the Gothic tradition, since the testers over nearly all these tombs have Gothic tracery; ..., nearly all have corbels of angels holding shields in a purely medieval manner. ...

All are costume-pieces of a high order, showing to perfection civil and military, feminine and infantine dress, and all testify to a standard of accomplishment on the part of the sculptor which is little less than amazing; were these works in foreign churches they would be starred in Baedeker. Almost all are in fine condition ..., and even the damage done to the exception, the tomb at Ross-on-Wye, shows no evidence of Cromwellian brutality, only the sort of partial disfigurement often due to choir boys, careless visitors, and, one must add, careless clergy and churchwardens; for a tomb will settle and something may crack and eventually break, or pieces be broken off if, as is too often the case still, the work is left unrepaired.

Katharine A Esdaile: *English Church Monuments 1510 - 1840* (Batsford - 1946)

## 5. Colonel William Rudhall (died 1651)

Between the two altar-tombs stands an alabaster figure representing the last Rudhall of the male line. This William is the son of William and Margaret (2) and younger brother of John (3). He is dressed in Roman armour with cloak. His right hand is resting on a sword, and his left on a cartouche of the Rudhall arms as a shield. He stands on a pedestal in the form of a column-base on a square base with trophies of arms. Round the margin of the pedestal is inscribed:

Cineribus Gul. Rudhale de Rudhall Arm illustris admodum nec minus antiqua Rudhalorum familia Haeredis supremi, Maria Suron Sola caelebs hoc monumentum Pietatis et Amoris ergo, maerens posuit obiit 20 Sepbris. Anno Christ 1651.

To the hairs of William Rudhall of Rudhall, Esq., members of a quite distinguished family, no less ancient than that of the Rudhalls. He died, unmarried, 27<sup>th</sup> September 1651.

This is the Colonel Rudhall who was a cavalier in the royalist army, and who led a local troop in a losing skirmish which took place in the Civil War at the bridge over the Wye at Wilton, on the road to Hereford. He died during the Commonwealth, a bachelor.

Mrs Jane Kelsall writes:

Innovative work can be endearing, as in the standing alabaster figure of Colonel Rudhall, where the sculptor shows a lack of confidence in the handling of the torso. Perhaps the sculptor had seen, and made a sketch of Nicholas Stone's monument to Francis Holles (d.1622) in Westminster Abbey. This is a seated figure in Roman style armour. The Ross figure may have been 'stood up' from the drawing of this seated figure, without accurate understanding of the balance of a standing figure.

Isolated standing figures on a pedestal are new in this period: they do not appear until 1570, when Netherlands sculpture exerted a fashionable influence. The Ross figure may claim to be one of the very first in England: there is another at Lydiard Tregoze in Wiltshire of Edward St John (d.1645), in gilt bronze. This is coarse and not so good as the Ross figure.

Yet who made Colonel Rudhall? As this soldier died in 1651, it is too late to be the work of Nicholas Stone, who died in 1647. His sculptor son Nicholas,

unlike his father, did travel to Italy and France, in 1638, and kept a detailed notebook. He saw the work of Donatello, Michelangelo and Bernini, which included many standing figures, but he died just a few years after his father. It could be that he made the figure just before his death. But unless it is the work of someone from the workshop of this family, it may not be too extravagant a claim that it is an early work of Nicholas Stone, senior, dating from around 1622.

Colonel Rudhall wears a fanciful kind of armour reminiscent of Inigo Jones' masque costumes and indeed Stone did work with Jones 1619-22 as his Master Mason at the Banqueting House, Whitehall. It is possible, just possible, that it was in the workshop when the Rudhall family came to order a monument and found this fascinating standing figure waiting for them. Perhaps the likeness was striking: or was a new head ordered? Research into the Rudhall family papers of this period (if any) may prove rewarding.

## 6. Thomas Westfaling (died 1814)

Thomas Westfaling married a relation of the Rudhall family and lived at Rudhall from 1791. He was buried at Edgeworth.

The bust is a copy of one taken from life in 1789, in Rome by Christopher Hewitson, and was said to be "a strong likeness". The monument was executed by William Theed, R.A., and the emblematical bas-relief of Charity instructing children was a model of his own. Prebendary Beattie appears not to have liked it, as he simply said, "this white marble bust of Thomas Brereton (sic) was placed among the Rudhall monuments in 1817."

Mrs J Kelsall:

The portrait bust on the monument to Thomas Westfaling is typical of the neo-classical sculpture which came into fashion after archaeological finds in the last years of the 18th century. Europeans were excited to discover the glory of Greece rather than the grandeur of Rome. White marbles became all the rage, and the sculptor John Gibson's belief that the Greek finds had once been highly painted was disregarded: he was proved right, much later in the 19th century, when statues were unearthed showing clear signs of painted eyes, skin and hair.

But by this time the somewhat chilly fashion for plain white figures was well established. Generally, the portrait busts are most successful when the eyeballs are carved in, to give expression. In the hands of a good sculptor, as in the bas relief of Charity instructing children on the Westfaling monument the neo-classical style is fairly successful. The portrait bust was

recorded as a good likeness: this neo-classical work can inspire admiration, if not affection.

SACRED TO THE MEMORY  
OF THOMAS WESTFALING ESQUIRE  
THE ONLY SON OF THE REVEREND RICHARD BRERETON  
OF THE COUNTY OF GLOCESTER.

HE MARRIED IN THE YEAR MDCCXCI,  
MARY, SOLE HEIRESS OF THE ANCIENT FAMILY OF WESTFALING  
OF WHICH HE ASSUMED THE NAME.

HE WAS BORN MAY XII.MDCCLX (1760)

DIED JUNE XVIII.MDCCCXIV (1814)

---

A MAN OF UNCORRUPTED AND UNBLEMISHED INTEGRITY;  
OF A MIND ARDENT IN SUPPORTING THE MEASURES HE APPROVED,  
YET SO TEMPERED BY THE BENIGNITY OF HIS MANNERS,  
AS TO CONCILIATE THE GOOD WILL OF HIS WARMEST OPPONENTS.  
HOW KINDLY HE PROVIDED FOR THE WANTS OF THE POOR,  
HOW STUDIOUSLY HE PROCURED INSTRUCTION FOR THEIR CHILDREN,  
THE TEARS OF THE POOR BEAR WITNESS.  
HOW WARM AND STEADY IN FRIENDSHIP,  
HOW DEAR AND USEFUL TO SOCIETY,  
HOW MUCH HE WAS THE DELIGHT AND ORNAMENT OF THIS  
NEIGHBOURHOOD,  
THE MONUMENT YOU BEHOLD MAY TESTIFY.  
IT WAS ERECTED BY THOSE  
WHO BEST KNEW AND BEST FELT HIS WORTH:  
HIS FRIENDS COMPANIONS AND NEIGHBOURS.

On the left side is the same epitaph in Latin:

M S  
THOMAE FILII REVERENDI VIRI RICHARDI BRERETON  
E COMITATU GLOCESTRENSI  
QUI MARIAM  
UNICAM EX ILLUSTRIS FAMILIA DE WESTFALING HAEREDEM  
UXOREM HABUIT, ET NOMEN ILLIUS SIBI ASSUMPSIT.  
NATUS DIE IV IDUS MAII. A.D. MDCCLX  
  
MORTUUS DIE XIV KALENDAS JUNII A.D. MDCCCXIV

---

VIR FIDE ANTIQUA ATQUE INCORRUPTA.  
ANIMI IN OMNIA QUIBUS FAVERET CONSILIIS ACERRIMIMI  
EA TAMEN MORUM BENIGNITATI CASTIGAT  
UT EORUM ETIAM, QUI NON IDEM SENTIRENT, AMICITIAM ET  
BENEVOLENTIAM SIBI CONCILIARET  
QUALIS FUIT IN PAUPERIBUS SUBLEVANDIS  
QUALIS IN EORUM LIBERIS ERUDIENDIS  
PAUPERUM LACRYMAE TESTANTUR.  
QUAM JUCUNDUS IN AMICITIA, SOCIETATI UTILIS,  
QUAM HUIUSCE VICINIAE ET DELICIAE ET ORNAMENTUM  
EX HOC MARMORE SCIAS.  
QVOD  
AMORIS, QVAECUNQUE SIT ET DESIDERII TESTIMONIUM  
TALIS VIRI NON IMMEMORES  
SVMPTVO SVO  
PONI CURAVERUNT  
AMICI, SOCII, VICINI.

Fosbroke's book of 1821 says: "Upon the pedestal is inscribed the following epitaph in elegant latinity, written by the present Bishop of St. Asaph." John Luxmore was Bishop of St. Asaph from 1815 to 1830.

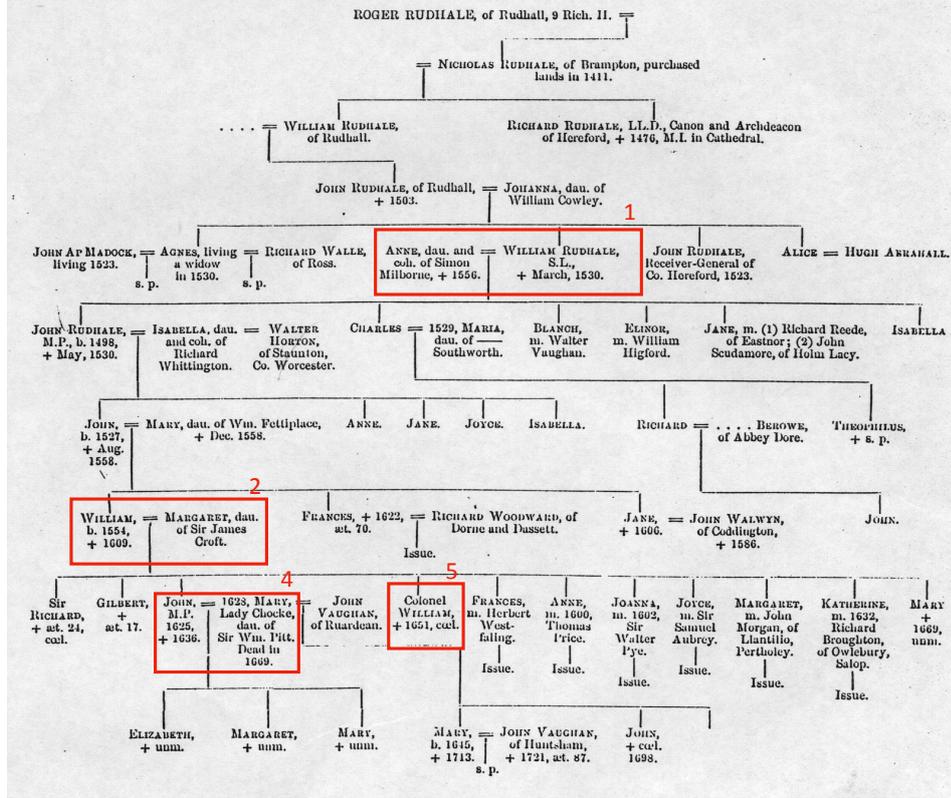
George Strong (1863) finishes his section on the Rudhall Monuments with some interesting detail of this part of the church which has now disappeared.

The Rudhall family having been smartly fined, by Parliamentary Sequestrators, for their attachment to the Stuarts - it is highly probable that the two painted Royal escutcheons, of the time of Anne and Charles II. respectively, which hang above the galleries, were presented by them - a homage to the Crown which does not seem to have been imitated in any of the neighbouring parishes. [One of these is probably the coat of arms of Queen Anne in the choir vestry].

... Ere taking a final leave of this ancient and honourable Family, we may glance at the four golden Caltrops [a weapon or tool with sharp spikes – one of them always pointing upwards] which ornament the corners of the Rudhall pew.

... The Caltrop was the Badge or Cognisance of the Westfaling family, forming a part of their arms, which were "a Cross between 4 Caltrops or," (see monuments.)

# RUDHALE, OF RUDHALL.



Rudhale family tree - key monuments identified.

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## 8. The Organ

### Organ Timeline

- **1658** A *Harleian Manuscript*, by Silas Taylor gives us: “In the Chancelle are the cells of an ancient Quire, and over them towards the body of the Church an Organ Loft”
- **(1668** Thomas Harris builds an organ for Salisbury Cathedral (4 stops). In **1679** this organ is sold in Bristol (for £50) the National Pipe Organ Register says to Parkend, this can't be correct, there was no church there until 1820.)
- **The 1726 Organ** - “The organ was opened [on 18<sup>th</sup> October] ... the front is said to have originally belonged to Salisbury Cathedral” (Fosbroke, pub. 1821) Please see below for more on the Salisbury case.
- **1826** – Organ appeal launched. (Parkend church, then 4 years old, records an instrument coming from Ross - with mention of Salisbury).
- **The 1827 Organ**. A new organ was built in a gallery under the tower, Lascelles Herefordshire Directory of 1851 mentions “In an elegant gallery at the west end of the church a well-toned organ was erected June 12<sup>th</sup> 1827, at a cost of 600 guineas.” It was built by the London builder, HC Lincoln.
- **1862** This organ was moved to a new gallery above the South Porch when the interior was transformed in 1862.
- **1874** The present organ chamber was built on the south side of the chancel and the organ is moved to that chamber. It was the gift of Miss Mary Sarah Hall and was originally intended to have contained a vestry at the lowest level with the organ above.
- **The 1886 Organ** Built by Eustace Ingram of Hereford. The specification of this instrument and correspondence from the builder can be seen at HARC.
- **The 1921 Organ** - The present organ was built by Hele & Co of Plymouth / Exeter.
- **1985** The action is electrified by John Coulson of Bristol
- **2011** A major rebuild, with several changes to the specification, by Trevor Tipple (Worcester).

## The 1726 Organ

Fosbroke mentions that “the organ was opened 18<sup>th</sup> Oct, 1726. The front of it is said to have originally belonged to Salisbury Cathedral.”

In 1679 an organ, built by Thomas Harris for Salisbury Cathedral in 1668, was - according to the National Pipe Organ Register - purchased in Bristol for £50. Various later sources place this instrument in Ross. What happened to it between 1679 and 1726, if this is the same organ case, is not known. Could it perhaps have been in Ross from 1679 in its original Salisbury form, perhaps on the rood screen, then moved to the new gallery at the west end in 1726 to front the new organ?

Additionally, two quotes from the church registers:

1726 – This year the organ was set up, **purchased of Mr Harris of London.** Robert Morgan DD, Rector; John Tudor, Curate; James Fisher, Nicholas Fisher, Churchwardens.

1728 - this year ye two western galleries on each side of ye organ gallery were built.

So it looks like the 1726 organ was built on a balcony in the tower. The reference to “Mr Harris” is interesting in relation to the possible Salisbury organ link. Although Thomas Harris was dead by 1725 he was only one of a dynasty of organ builders (Renatus Harris – his son being the most famous) and the “Mr Harris of London” mentioned in Ross could well be one of the grandsons of Thomas, another Renatus or John, who were in Holborn then.

Fosbroke also mentions (1821) that “the ancient rood-loft is said to have contained an organ” (suggesting that by 1821 it no longer did). We believe this “rood loft” was itself taken away around the time he wrote this. It is likely that the rood (three statues depicting the crucifixion) would have been removed at the Reformation; perhaps an organ took their place.



According to the Parkend Church guidebook, “The Organ” in September 1826 contained an advert: “For Sale: Salisbury Chaire Organ, Ross.” This is exactly the year in which the appeal for the next organ was launched in Ross and just a few years after St Paul’s Church Parkend in the Forest of Dean was built. The case is still there. There are many records of rebuilding and replacement of the organ itself

though, since its move, and the case (also what is presumably the original case pipes) is now rather sadly covered in white paint.

## The 1827 organ

Ross Church, 2 June 1826.

Whereas it hath long been considered by parishioners, and other persons of respectability, occasionally attending Divine Service in this Church, that a new Organ suitable to the Choral arrangements herein, is highly desirable; it is now, therefore, resolved by the principal Inhabitants, that a Subscription be opened for the purchasing of such new Organ; and that the Reverend Clergy, and the Nobility and Gentry of the County, be, with the utmost deference and respect, solicited for their Contributions in aid of this pious object.

Major donors of the 1826 organ appeal are recorded on a board on the south side of the choir vestry in the tower. The initial list of subscribers is headed with the name of the Bishop £50. Two Members of Parliament and the Rector subscribe at £21. Nine are on the list at ten guineas, and ten at five guineas.

The 1827 organ installed as a result of this appeal was built by Henry Cephias Lincoln – a London based family firm during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was opened on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1827, total cost £650. A town guide of 1827 tells us:

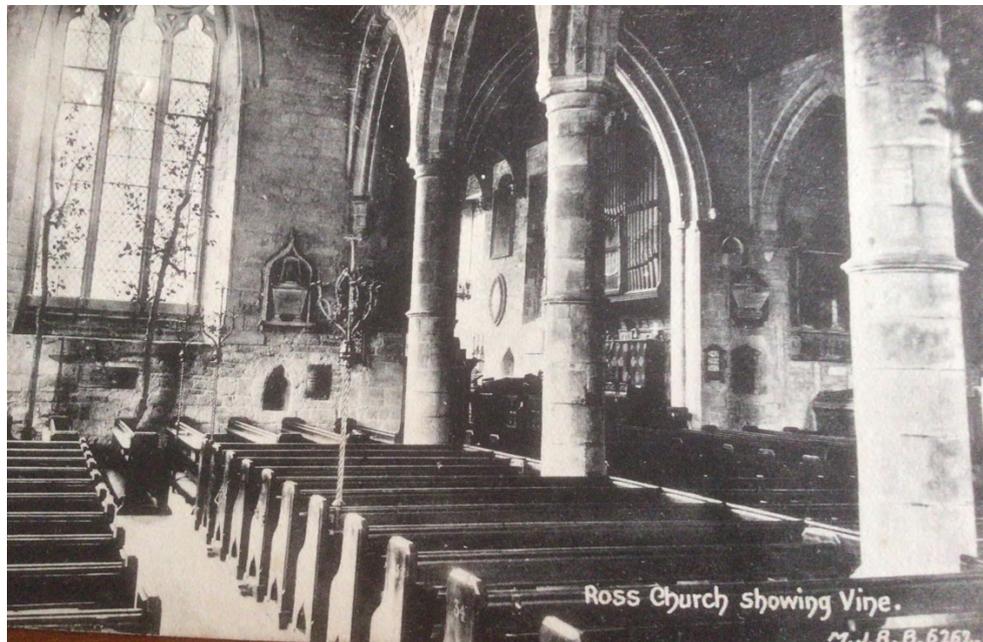
In an elegant gallery, at the west end of the church, a well toned organ has been newly erected by subscription, in place of the old one, put up in 1726. It was made by Mr Lincoln of London and possess more compass and power than the former one. Wesley and Purkis both speak in the highest terms of it.

The “Wesley” mentioned here would presumably have been Samuel Sebastian Wesley, organist of Hereford Cathedral 1832-36.

The organ was located on a gallery in the tower until 1862 when it was moved to the south porch, then to the present chamber when it was constructed in 1873.

## The 1886 Organ

It appears that there was quite a focus on replacing, rebuilding and repositioning organs in the church in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as the 1827 instrument was replaced in 1886 by a new one built by Eustace Ingram of Hereford. There are quite a few items of correspondence relating to this instrument, including its specification at HARC.



A postcard from 1910 showing a tantalising glimpse of the 1886 organ case in the chancel.

## The Present Organ (1921)

The organ we have today was the gift of Mrs Edith Purchas and was given as a thank offering for the safe return of many men of Ross from the First World War. It was constructed by Hele & Company, Limited, of Plymouth in 1921 at a cost of £2600, only 36 years after the last one. The instrument was first used at Edith Purchas's funeral. The instrument was originally built with pneumatic action, this was electrified in 1985 by John Coulson of Bristol and the instrument substantially rebuilt in 2011. The specification (list of stops) when originally installed was as follows:

Compass of Manuals, CC to A. Compass of Pedals, CCC to F.

### GREAT ORGAN

1 Bourdon	16 feet
2 Large Open Diapason	8 feet
3 Small Open Diapason	8 feet
4 Flauto Traverso	8 feet
5 Stopped Diapason	8 feet
6 Harmonic Flute	4 feet
7 Principal	4 feet
8 Fifteenth	2 feet
9 Tromba	8 feet

*(By Pneumatic Transmission from Choir Organ).*

### SWELL ORGAN

1 Violin Diapason	8 feet
2 Stopped Diapason	8 feet
3 Echo Gamba	8 feet
4 Voix Celeste (Tenor C)	8 feet
5 Viola	4 feet
6 Dulciana Mixture	3 ranks
7 Contra Fagotto	16 feet
8 Cornopean ( <i>Harmonic Treble</i> )	8 feet
9 Oboe	8 feet

*(By Pneumatic Transmission from Contra Fagotto and carried up one octave).*

10 Tremulant

### CHOIR ORGAN

1 Gamba	8 feet
2 Dulciana	8 feet
3 Stopped Diapason	8 feet
4 Stopped Flute	4 feet
5 Basset Horn	8 feet

*(In separate Swell Box)*

6 Tromba ( <i>Harmonic Treble</i> )	8 feet
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*(Heavy Wind). (On separate Sound Board).*

### PEDAL ORGAN

1 Sub Bass (to <i>G G G</i> )	32 feet
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*(Lowest Seven Notes resultant).*

2 Open Diapason	16 feet
-----------------	---------

3 Violone	16 feet
-----------	---------

4 Bourdon ( <i>from GREAT</i> )	16 feet
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5 Principal	8 feet
-------------	--------

6 Bass Flute	8 feet
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7 Bombarde ( <i>On Heavy Wind</i> )	16 feet
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8 Fagotto	16 feet
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*(By Pneumatic Transmission from Contra Fagotto Swell).*

### COUPLERS

Swell to Pedal. Great to Pedal. Choir to Pedal. Swell Octave. Swell Sub Octave. Swell to Great. Swell to Choir. Choir Sub Octave. Choir to Great. Pedal Compositions to Great Pistons.

### ACCESSORIES

Four Pistons to Great.

Three Pistons to Swell.

Three Compositions to Pedal.

Two Balanced Crescendo Pedals.

The action to Manuals, Pedals, Couplers, Draw-Stops, Pistons and Compositions was Tubular Pneumatic, of the Builders' improved type.

Two Rotary Blowers driven by Electric Motors provide wind of various pressures from 3-inches to 9-inches.

Casework and Key Fittings are of Oak.

This specification is copied verbatim from a printed leaflet, of which a copy is now at HARC. An annotated copy of the same document has been found (annotation believed to be by Fredrick Parsons, the organist at the time of the 1921 installation) which gives the following information:

Great Organ:	was entirely new, with the exception of the Bourdon.
Swell Organ:	2. Stopped Diapason – new, bottom octave only 9. Oboe – about 24 old pipes employed
Choir Organ:	3 Stopped Diapason – lowest octave from old organ
Pedal Organ:	2. Open Diapason – entirely from old organ 7. Bombard – entirely new

## The 2011 Organ Restoration

The 2011 rebuild saw the instrument restored to better than its original condition. One of the biggest pieces of work was to replace all the original pneumatics which until 2011 still constituted the final stages of the action. These were not touched in the earlier rebuild in 1985. All remaining leather work was replaced, including re-leathering of the bellows.

All case pipes and those not on the main chests were properly electrified. In some cases (notably the pedal bombard) some substandard electrification was removed and a pneumatic stage reintroduced.

The opportunity was also taken to carry out a number of tonal changes; in particular the addition of a mixture on the great and re-voicing of some of the swell pipe-work to remedy a heavily "stringy" tone there. The console was also restored with

reconditioned keyboards incorporating new key action and a computerised capture piston system.

The work was carried out by Trevor G Tipple of Worcester and his team (particularly Peter Hughes), in whose care the instrument had been since the early 1990s. The rebuild was financed entirely by a private donation in memory of the late Dr John Glydon-Jones.

## Specification of the Rebuilt (2011) Organ (changes in red)

### Great

1	Bourdon	16	from no 28
2	Open Diapason I	8	
3	Open Diapason II	8	
4	Flauto Traverso	8	
5	Principal	4	
6	Harmonic Flute	4	
7	Fifteenth	2	
8	Mixture III	12-15-19	replaces St. Diapason
9	Tromba	8	
i	Swell to Great		
ii	Choir to Great		

### Swell

10	Diapason	8	revoiced to match 15
11	Echo Gamba	8	
12	Voix Celeste	8	
13	Stopped Diapason	8	
14	Principal	4	replaced Viola
15	Mixture III	15-19-22	reconstituted
16	Contra Fagotto	16	from no 18 (previously 17)
17	Oboe	8	increased in volume
18	Corno pean	8	
iii	<i>Tremulant</i>		
iv	<i>Swell Octave</i>		
v	<i>Swell Sub-Octave</i>		
vi	<i>Unison Off</i>		

### Choir (unenclosed except for Basset Horn)

19	Stopped Diapason	8	
20	Flute	4	
21	Nazard	2 2/3	replaces Dulciana
22	Piccolo	2	replaces Gamba
23	Tromba	8	from no 9
24	Basset Horn	8	reduced in volume
vii	<i>Tremulant</i>		

viii *Choir Octave*  
ix *Swell to Choir*

#### **Pedal**

25	Sub Bass	32	
26	Open Diapason	16	
27	Violone	16	
28	Bourdon	16	
29	Principal	8	from no 26
30	Bass Flute	8	from no 28
31	Bombard	16	from no 9
32	Fagotto	16	from no 16
33	Tromba	8	from no 9

x *Great to Pedal*  
xi *Swell to Pedal*  
xii *Choir to Pedal*

#### **New Piston System providing:**

6 thumb pistons each to Great, Swell and Choir  
6 general thumb pistons  
6 toe pistons to Pedal / Great  
6 toe pistons to Swell / Generals  
1 thumb and toe piston reverser Sub Bass 32'  
1 thumb and toe piston reverser Bombard 16'  
1 stop operating Great to Pedal pistons  
1 stop operating Generals to Swell toe pistons  
1 thumb and toe piston reverser Swell to Great  
1 thumb and toe piston reverser Great to Pedal  
1 thumb piston reverser Swell to Pedal  
1 thumb piston reverser Choir to Pedal  
1 set piston  
1 general cancel piston

All combinations are adjustable with conventional "capture method" incorporating setter switches and LED display

Generals 96 memories  
Departmental 16 memories

#### **Compass**

Manual: CC – a (58 notes)  
Pedal: CCC – f (30 notes)  
Total pipes = 1619

## **Organists at St Mary's**

Post holders from 1828 -1954 are from Mrs Leeds WI History of Ross (1950s) which can be found at HARC.

James Parry	1730-35	Author of "The True Anti-Pamela. ..." 1741
Thomas Granville	? - 1773	Notes of vestry meeting [Hfd Arch L78/8]
Thomas Bills	1773 – 1787+	Ibid – 1787 salary = £25 pa
Mr E Smith	1826	On the donors' board for the 1827 organ
William Moss	1828 – 1881	NB 53 years!
Marian? Halford ne Moss	1881 – 1896	
Mr Trotman	1896 – 1902	Selwyn College Cambridge
Mr Goodacre	1902 – 1912	Assistant organist of Peterborough Cathedral
Frederick J Parsons	1912 – 1949	Previously assistant organist of Chichester Cathedral. Local weatherman.
Sir James Almond FRCO	1949 – 1954	
Frank Rolls FRCO	1954 – 1961	Previously Bournemouth Parish Church
Ivan Constance	1961 - ?	
John Mitchell	?	
Jack Greenway	? – 1988?	
John Handley	?1988 -1989	
Howard Davies	1989 -1995	
Mark Sanderson (DoM)	1995 – present	Director of Music
Tim Virgo (organist)	1995 – 2005	Organist
Gareth Robertshaw (o)	2005 – 2006	
Robert Lucas (o)	2006	
Dr Michael Payne (o)	2007 – 2015	
Laurence John (o)	2015-2016	2017-20 Organ Scholar Queen's Col. Oxford, Ast Director of Music, St Davids Cathedral
Adrian Taylor (o)	2016 – present	



James Parry (organist of Ross) by James Mynde, engraver – 1770 - The National Library of Wales

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## 9. Clergy

### Rectors and Vicars?

Throughout this document references have been made to Rectors as well as to Vicars of Ross. This is because, until 1671, there were both Rectors and Vicars of Ross – and residences for both postholders (though the location of each is somewhat confused). The post of Rector of Ross was a sinecure (i.e. a post, attracting an income for the holder of the post, but which involves little or no work, or even a requirement to live in the town). This was a reasonably common situation in the medieval Church.

In the case of Ross the income for both Rector and Vicar came in the form of tithes paid to each. A tithe was a tax of one tenth of the annual income from the sale of cattle,

grain, hay (the great tithes) wool, lambs, chickens (small tithes). And yes, you've probably worked out which type of tithe went to which post holder!

The one job expected of the Rector was then to appoint a Vicar who actually did the work, having the care of the souls in the parish. Until 1671 the Parish of Ross included the present-day parishes of Weston under Penyard and Brampton Abbots. The churches in these villages were "chappellarys" of Ross. More is explained in the section on Dr John Newton below.

This list of Rectors and Vicars is a long one but a few stand out and deserve particular mentions:

### **Revd Philip Price (Vicar 1615-46 & 1661)**

A number of incidents during Philip Price's time in Ross as Vicar are worthy of mention. The first, and most importantly, his involvement in leading the people of the town through one of its most difficult episodes, that of plague in 1637. There's more about that on the section on the Plague Cross in the churchyard. Thomas Jenkins, who died in 1830 reported the story as it had been passed down by townsfolk in his lifetime. "... Good Vicar Price used to stand at the cross, solemnising funerals by torchlight." Other accounts speak of his devotion to the people of the town while putting his own life at risk to minister to the dying. He is said to have led a procession through the streets of the town one morning at 5am chanting the Litany, after which the situation began to ease.

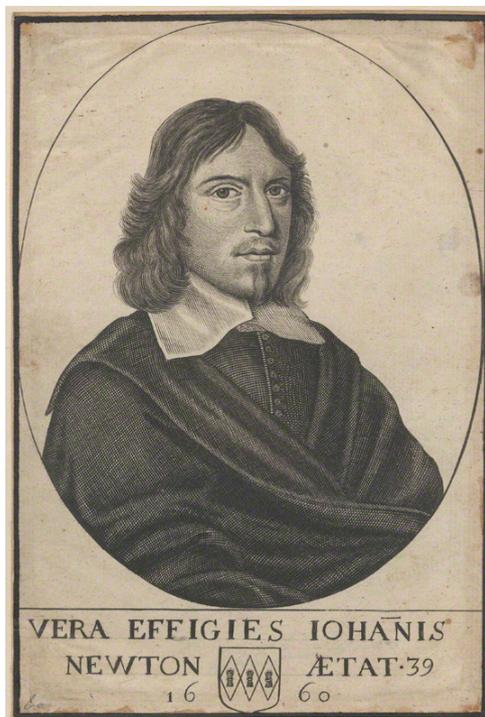
But these were turbulent times in the country, the Civil War was afoot. Unfortunately "Good Vicar Price" was not so greatly thanked for his efforts on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1646 when he was removed from his living and sent packing from the Vicarage for refusing to give up the services of the Prayer Book during the Commonwealth. He had already been relieved of his duties at Weston in February of the same year.

He was replaced by a succession of dubious characters who were more in sympathy with the prevailing religious mood of the time. During the Commonwealth he is believed to have sought sanctuary at the Saracen's Head (the handsome black and white building by the Market House) through the charity of John Farne, the landlord (whose

monument will be found by the Pulpit). He was restored to the living when things had settled down in 1661 but died very soon after.

## Revd Dr John Newton (Vicar then Rector 1661-1678)

If Philip Price had been treated unjustly by the Church then surely the appointment of John Newton as his successor vindicated him. John Newton was a very well educated man; a mathematician and astrologer of national importance. In the year he was appointed Vicar of Ross he was also made Doctor of Divinity and, a strong supporter of the Monarchy, appointed chaplain to King Charles II.



Fortunately for the people of Ross he was a tremendous judge of character and well placed to manage the expectations of the growing non-conformist thinking and theology that was a feature of Ross around the Civil War.

But perhaps his chief contribution to the town and church was in bringing about an end to the practice of having both a Rector and Vicar in the Parish. An Act of Parliament in 1671 amalgamated the roles and at the same time created Weston and Brampton Abbots as separate parishes, with their own parish church (they had previously been chapelries of Ross). The following is to be found in the Parish Register for 1671:

This act was procured by the pains and care of John Newton DD & Vicar of this place.

Remember me, O my God, concerning this and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy – Nehemiah 13:14, 22

To my successors at Ross, Brampton Abbots and Weston.  
If you chance to find

Glebe and Tythes to your minde  
Procur'd without yor cost  
Be good to the poor  
As God gives you store  
And then my Labours not lost.

The “Glebe and Tythes” referred to here is a reference to the unfair system of tythes paid to the Rector and Vicar of the parish, with an unfair share to the Rector who had no duties and was often not even resident in the parish. From this date he became Rector and was the last Vicar of Ross.

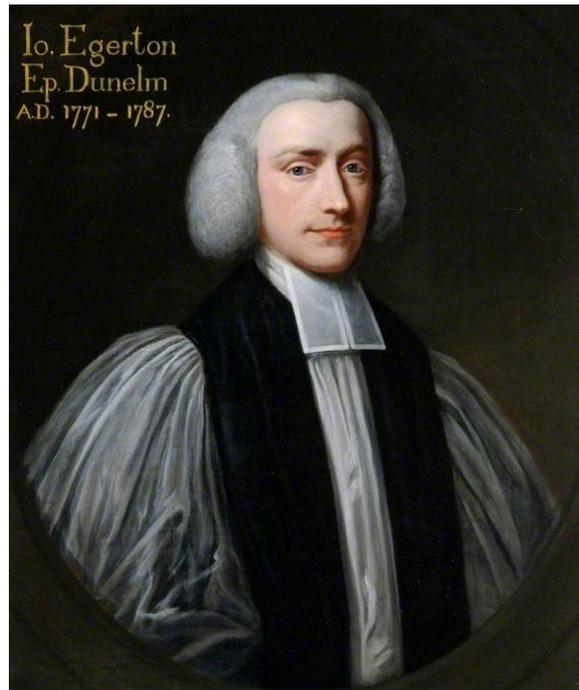
Brampton Abbots and Weston under Penyard did not receive their first Rectors until 1684

### **Revd John Egerton (Rector 1745-1771)**

John Egerton became Rector of Ross in 1745 at the age of 23 – his father was the Bishop of Hereford. He was otherwise well connected, his mother was daughter of the Earl of Portland and his father, Henry the younger son of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Bridgewater (a title which eventually passed to John's son in 1803).

He was not around in Ross for all that long, becoming Dean of Hereford in 1750, Bishop of Bangor in 1756, Lichfield and Coventry in 1768 and Durham in 1771 – a post which he held until his death in 1787. Despite, presumably, being unable to spend very much time in Ross from 1750 he didn't give up the living, until his appointment to Durham in 1771.

Ross-on-Wye claims to be the birthplace of organised tourism in Britain and John Egerton is the man responsible for this. Soon after arriving in Ross he began inviting his many well connected friends to stay and as a part of the entertainment had a boat built to take them on trips down the Wye. This grew in popularity, especially when William Gilpin came in 1770 and published the first of what turned out to be



many guides to the tour. By this time it had developed into a highly organised two day commercial enterprise from Ross to Chepstow. The Wye Tour was born.

## List of Rectors & Vicars (taken mainly from Bishops Registers)

The following lists was compiled by Dr Janet Cooper in 2022 for the display, "the Face of St Mary's" on the clergy vestry.

### Rectors

- 1277 William Daubeney presented
- 1288 John de Shelvinge presented
- 1295 John de Kempsey presented on death of John de Shelvinge
- 1307 John Goty, by papal provision
- 1308 James de Henley presented
- 1330 John de Launceston, presented
- 1334 Robert de Henley presented on death of John de Laucestone
- 1342 Thomas Tallbot on exchange with Robert de Henley
- 1362 Adam Eseger, canon of Hereford, on death of Sir Thomas Talbot. [Eseger held prebend of Gorwell and Overbury 1341 – 1369, so perhaps resigned living/died in 1369]
- 1374 William Lye, rector of Ross, ordained subdeacon
- 1377 Roger de Stanford rector of Kempsey, presented, by exchange with William Lye
- 1378 John Godemestone presented on death of Roger Stanford

1397 William Panter presented on resignation of John Godmestone  
1398, Sept. John Godmestone presented by Crown  
1401 John Tronant presented  
1402 John Cresset, presented by exchange with John ap Howell  
1403 Thomas Field recorded as rector  
1408 John Gardiner by exchange with Thomas Field  
1418, May, Walter Lacy on resignation of John Gardiner  
1418, Aug., John Gardiner on resignation of Walter Lacy  
1420 John Stanway, rector of Aldrington Worcester diocese, by exchange with John Gardiner  
1430 John Baysham on resignation of John Stanway  
1434 Richard Roderham presented by bishop  
1454 Master Robert Jordan presented on resignation of Richard Roderham  
1466 Hugh Ragoun presented on death of Robert Jordan  
Richard Judde, died 1512  
1512 William Gobbard presented on death of Richard Judde  
1516 William Webbe, archdeacon of Hereford, on death of William Gobbard  
1521 Edward Finch canon of Salisbury and prebendary of Farrington, doctor of medicine, exchange with William Webbe  
1539 Leonard Heydon presented by Thomas Cromwell by bishop's grant, on death of Edward Finch  
1554 Griffin Williams presented by Thomas Cowen – presumably to the rectory as he presented vicar in 1563  
1574 John Watkins instituted by bishop. Described as vicar, presumably in error, at his death in 1594  
1594 William St Barbe, presented. He died 1627  
1627 Henry Hacket collated; Database says till death in 1645, but see below  
1642 Roland Scudamore recorded as rector. Rector at his death in 1645 [Succeeded Hacket as prebendary of Preston.]  
1645 John Coake presented. Apparently recorded as rector in 1674; died 1675.  
1660 Philip Price, formerly vicar, presented; seems to have died within the year.  
1660 John Newton presented  
1679 Thomas Brome MA presented by bishop on death of John Newton DD  
1699 Charles Whiting DD on death of Thomas Brome

1712 Robert Morgan DD on death of Charles Whiting  
1745 John Egerton LLD on death of Robert Morgan (became Dean of Hereford, Bishop of Bangor then Coventry & Litchfield, only relinquished Ross living on his translation to Durham in 1771)  
1771 Theophilus Meredith MA presented by king on translation of John Egerton to Durham  
1775 Charles Morgan MA presented on death of Theophilus Meredith  
1779 Hugh Morgan presented on cession of Charles Morgan  
1801 Thomas Underwood MA on resignation of Hugh Morgan  
1839 Charles Armore Ogilvie presented by archbishop on death of Thomas Underwood  
1873 Robert Henry Cobbold on death of Charles Armore Ogilvie  
1893 Edward Henry Winnington Ingram on death of Robert Henry Cobbold  
1910 Rowland Tracey Ash Moneu-Kyrle  
1926 Ernest Halden Beatie  
1937 Percy Charles Barber  
1950 Gilbert Salkeld Stockley  
1967 Raymond John Thursfield  
1979 Paul Charles Wheatley  
1992 Roger Stirrup  
1999 John Bernard Hunnisett  
2007 Sarah Jane Jones  
2019 Sean Alexander John Semple  
2025 Kelvin Ian Price

## **Vicars**

1277 Vicar, not named. Probably Master Henry de Hawkley d. 1279  
Before 1298 Nicholas, who was dead by 1298  
1340 John de Henley presented  
1349 Thomas le Mercer on death of John de Henley  
1349 Adam de Bernynton on death of Thomas le Mercer  
1349 John le Yonge presented  
1434 Richard Lye on death of Thomas Young  
1458 John Thamys Sac Theol Bac, on death of Richard Lye  
1482 Thomas Morton LLB on death of John Themyse  
1514 Richard Parkhurst MA on resignation of Thomas Chippenham

1520 John Oliver, bac on decrees, on resignation of Richard Parkhurst

1549 Thomas Lewis on resignation of John Oliver

1563 Lewis Williams d. 1591

1615 death of Bernard Bennett vicar

1615 Philip Price appointed; still 1639

## Historical List of Rectors and Vicars

### Sources

At least three historical lists exist of clergy who have been connected with Ross. What follows is an attempt to put them together. There are few facts on which there is complete agreement between them. Otherwise, there are broad similarities and some striking differences. In places it appears that all three have had independent looks at the same primary sources. None tells us what primary sources were consulted, and this makes the process of checking more difficult. Many of the notes are interesting, however and more information is given on individual post holders.

- F **Fosbroke** (c.1820) gives some corroborating details and admits gaps. His dates appear to be normally those of the end of the incumbency.
- D **Duncumb** (c.1880) gains by listing Rectors and Vicars in parallel columns but suffers in that the accompanying transcriptions of memorials in St Mary's prove, on comparison with the originals, to be woefully inaccurate.
- B **Bannister** (c.1920) purports to be a list of Rectors.

Date	Source	Name	Rector / Vicar	Notes
1276-87		William de Ablaniat (F)	Rector	
	D, F	d'Albanico (D)	Vicar	
(1277)		de Albaniace (B)		bestowed much cost on the Chancel, Cathedral archives via Fosbroke
128x	D	Nicholas	Vicar	
1287	B	John de Shelvyng	Rector	& Prebendary
1288	D	de Scelving		
1290	F	de Shelving		
1295	D	John de Kemseye	Rector	& Prebendary
1297	D	John de Kemseye	Vicar	

1298	B	John de Kemeseye		? An entry in the Bishops Register of 1298: UNION OF THE VICARAGE WITH THE RECTORATE OF ROS.- Memorandum that on the 5th of March, in the year of Dom. 1397, the lord of Ros united the vicarage of the church of Ros, recently by the <b>death of Nicholas</b> , the last vicar in the same, vacant to the lord <b>John de Kemeseye, priest, rector</b> of the aforesaid Ros, to be possessed in perpetuity according to the manner and form of the following letters made to Master John, rector of Lindregge, which you will be able to find above in the register [1] in the year Dom. 1397, etc. (MS)
1303	F	John de Kemmes		
1307	B	John Gety		
1307	F, D	John Coci	Vicar (D)	(son of Thomas de Coci) and
1308	F	James Henlee		collated Priests of the Church of Ross
1308	B	James de Hebley		
1312	F, D	John de Rosse	Rector	[Memorial in Church] There is no primary evidence that John de Ross (though born and buried in Ross) was ever Rector here.
1318	D	William de Ross	Rector	
1320	F	Thomas Talbot	Rector	[Of him below]
1330	D	John de Lanceston	Rector	
1330	B	John de Launceton		
1332	F	William de Rosse	Rector	also Archdeacon
1334	D, B	Robert de Henley	Rector	
1340	D	Robert de Henley	Vicar	
1342	D	Thomas Talbot D.D.	Rector	
1348,		Feb 9. The Bishop of Hereford admitted Lord Thomas de Mercer, priest, to the Vicarage of Ross, upon the presentation of Lord Thomas Talbots, Rector of the Church of Ross. This Rosse Parsonage or Rectory was an Honorary, and soe disposable to a layman, who was Lord of the Parsonage, and presented to the Vicaridge. Reg Trillec p.21		
1348	D	Thomas le Mercer	Vicar	
1349	B	Thomas de Mercer		(alias Talbot)
1350	D	John le Yonge		Vicar
1362		Adam de Esgar		(23 <sup>rd</sup> May, ink note in margin of library copy of Fosbroke)
1362	B	Adam Esegar		
1374	D, B	William Lye	Rector	
1374	D	Robert Parry	Vicar	
1376	D	William Panter	Vicar	
1377	B	John Godmestone		
1397	B	William Panter		
1398	D	John Godemaston	Rector	
1398	B	John Trefnant		He features in a list of "institutions and collations" in the bishop's Register but John Trefnant was the bishop at the time!
1401	D	John Trevenant, BCL	Vicar	
1402	B	John Cressett		
1402	D	John Oresett	Vicar	

1408	B	John Gardiner		
1414	F, D	John Stanway	Rector	(Dean of Hereford)
1416	D	John Gardiner	Vicar vac.	
1417	D	Walter Lacy	Vicar vac.	
1418	D	John Gardiner	Vicar	
1418	B	Walter Lacy	(Rector)	
1420	B	John Stanway	(Rector)	Dean of Hereford
1420	F	Thomas Yonge	Vicar	
1420	D	Thomas Young	Vicar	
1430	F	Richard Rotherham, STP	Rector	He was Confessor to the Bishop of Hereford, and built the Chancel at Hentland; probably therefore Vicar of Lugwardine.
1430	D, B	John Baysham	Rector	Prebendary
1434	D, B	Richard Rotherham, DD	Rector	
1434	D	Richard Lye	Vicar	
1438	F	Robert Jordan	Rector or Vicar	
1453	D	Robert Jordan	Rector	
1453	F	John Davyes	Vicar	
1454	B	Robert Jordan		
1458	D	Philip Thomas, BD	Vicar	
1463	F	Hugh Ragoun	Rector or Vicar	
1466	D	Hugh Ragon	Rector	
1466	B	Hugh Ragen		
	F	A query has been started, whether John Berewe did not hold the Rectory at this period. It seems pretty clear, that a person named Berewe was a donor to the Chantry at Ross, and that the House, now the Nag's Head Inn, was the property, judged to have been given, and which was of old commonly called Berewe's Inn. A John Berewe was first promoted in the Cathedral of Hereford in 1429, and died Dean in 1462.		
1476	D	Thomas Moreton, LLB	Rector	Archdeacon
1510		Thomas Moreton, LLB	Rector	Archdeacon of Hereford Bishops Register has "1482 Jan 30 Ross (vic.). Thomas Mortone, utriusque juris bac. Hugh Ragon, rect. of Ross. Death of <b>John Themyse</b> "
1484	D	Thomas Chippenham	Vicar vac.	
1486	F	Thomas Chippenham, AM		Perpetual Vicar of this Church and Parish. At his instance a curious and beautiful Rood Loft was erected in the Church (after the fashion of the Rood Loft at Ledbury) at a public charge. Bishops Register shows his ordination as Deacon in 1480
c.1490	B	Richard Judde		
1510	D	Richard Judde	Rector	Canon Resid. Of Hereford
1511	F	Richard Judde	Rector	
1512	D	William Gobarde BA	Rector	Archdeacon of Hereford
1512	B	William Gobard		
1514	D	Richard Parkhurst	Vicar	

1516	F	Richard Parkhurst	Vicar	He is understood to have been the immediate successor of Chippenham.
1516	D	William Webbe		Rector Archdeacon
1516	B	William Webbe		
1522	F	William Webbe	Rector	Archdeacon of Hereford. Said to have been kinsman of Bishop Mayew. He died in 1522, and lies buried in Hereford Cathedral.
1520	D	John Oliver, als. Smith	Vicar vac.	
1521	D	Edward Fynche MD	Rector	
1521	B	Edward Fynche		Canon of Salisbury
1539	D	Leonard Haydon	Rector	
1539	B	John Oliver, alias Smythe	(Rector)	
1548	B	Thomas Lewys	(Rector)	
1550	D	Thomas Lewis	Vicar	
1563	F	Thomas Lewis	Vicar	buried at Ross
1554	D	Griffith Williams	Rector	
1554	B	Griffyn Williams		
1563	D	Lewis Williams	Vicar	
1591	F	Ludovicus or Lewis Williams	Vicar	In his time the following entry was made in the old Register, "1585, on the 30 <sup>th</sup> of August was buried in the Cathedral of Hereford, John Scorey the unworthy Bishop of that See."
1574	B	John Watkins		
1575	D	John Watkins	Rector	Dean of Hereford
1594	F	John Watkins, AM	Rector	Dean of Hereford buried at Ross in 1594, much lamented.
C1590	B	Bernard Bennet		
1594	D	Bernard Bennett	Rector	Prebendary
1594	D	Bernard Bennett	Vicar	
1615	F	Bernard Bennett	Vicar	buried at Ross
1615	D	William St Barbe	Rector Prebendary	
1615	D	Philip Price MA	Vicar	
1615	B	Philip Price MA	(Rector)	
1646	F	Philippe Price (sic)	Vicar	He is believed to have been the successor of Mr. Bennett in the Vicarage and was deprived for his loyalty in 1646. He died, and was privately buried, Mr. J. thinks, in the Chancel at Ross in 1653. Divers Licenses to invalids and lying-in women, to eat flesh on Fish-days in Lent were registered by Philippe Price, Vicar.
1619	D	Thomas Godwin, DD	Rector	
1625	D	Henry Hacket MA	Rector	Prebendary
1642	F	Henry Hacket AM	Rector	He resided, died, and was buried at Ross, leaving an admirable character. His daughter Mary was married to Thomas Cocks of Castleditch Esq. She died in 1675 and lies buried at Eastnor. In Mr. Hacket's time Nathaniel Hill was a celebrated preacher.

1642	D	Rowland Scudamore DCL	Rector	Killed during the siege of Hereford, 1645
	F	[Under the rebel government, the Rectory, then a Sinecure, was usurped by one John Tombs, B.D. an Anabaptist. He was a Theologist of some note in his day, and the same Man, who held a public disputation with Baxter in the Temple Church, London, in the event of which, their disciples – the Saints present, proceeded to fighting. This Man seems to have resigned the Rectory in 1658, and as is said, was ultimately reconciled to the Church. He died and was buried in Salisbury.		
	D	During the usurpation, the Rectory and Vicarage of Ross were held by John Tombs, Vicar of Leominster, and Jonathan Smith, of Ross, "Ministers of God's word."		
	F	The Vicarage of Ross was also then held by one Jonathan Smith; and there being two Jonathan Smiths contemporaries, it is fit to note, that they appear to have been father and son, or uncle and nephew, the former being the mock Vicar. In Rudder's Gloucestershire (p.696) is a long Epitaph of this man, stating that he was born at Rochester 16 April 1609, was educated in Ireland, [It is omitted, that he was apprenticed to a Taylor in Canterbury, and was a bankrupt hosier at Sandwich] officiated at Ross twelve years, was expelled by the return of the King, and died anno 1670, aged 62. His Epitaph purely makes a Merit of a vehement propensity to preaching. Whether he talked sense or nonsense was of no moment, because Enthusiasm ascribes to feelings only, the honour justly due to Labour and Learning; and thus, deprives the public of edification and instruction.		
		It is noted by Walker in his sufferings of the Clergy, that these obscure persons represented themselves and their brethren, as in rank Apostles, mimicking the phrases applied to, and used in Scripture, by these Holy Persons, although void of their grand credentials, Prophecy and Miracle. This remark may illustrate the pompous nonsense of the above Epitaph, and that of his son or nephew as presumed, who was buried at Ross, in a garden, formerly a burying ground of the Quakers, Sep. 18, 1678 aet. 45. His sole claim to honour is that of preaching.]		
c1630	B	John Coke		
1645	D	John Coke	Rector	Rector of Whitborne, from which benefice the Parliament Commissioners dispossessed him by force.
1671	F	John Cooke	Rector	
1660	F	John Newton, DD	Vicar	(Memorial & DNB)
1661	D	John Newton	Vicar	
1675		An act of parliament was passed in 1671, thanks to the efforts of John Newton, changing the status of the Parish. From 1675 (when the act was fully enforced) there are only Rectors of Ross.		
1675	D	John Newton, D.D.	Rector	(died 26 Dec 1678)
1679	D, B	Thomas Brome, M.A. Balliol		
1699	F	Thomas Brome, A.M.		
1699	D, B	Charles Whiting, D.D. Wadham	(1661-1711); Oxford, Hart Hall, pleb. matric, 1677; scholar of Wadham, 1678; fellow 1686; Lecturer SL Martin's, Carfax; Chaplain to Dr Ironside, Bishop of Bristol, q.v.; Prebendary of Hereford, 1694; Rector of Ross, 1699-1711, buried at Ross. [N side of chancel next to John Kyrle, his friend] <a href="https://www.oxoniensia.org/volumes/1986/wood.pdf">https://www.oxoniensia.org/volumes/1986/wood.pdf</a>	
1711	F	Charles Whiting, D.D.	epitaph (d.25.10.11)	
1712	D, B	Robert Morgan, D.D. Ch. Ch	Canon Res Hfd	
1745	F	Robert Morgan, D.D	memorial.	
1745	D, B	John Egerton, D.C.L Oriel		

1771	F	John Egerton, D.D.	Ordained in 1745, he became immediately Rector of Ross, adding in 1746 a canonry in Hereford Cathedral. In 1749 he became also a chaplain to the King, in 1750 Dean of Hereford, in 1756 Bishop of Bangor, being translated to be Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry in 1768. It was only when he became Bishop of Durham in 1771 that he resigned the Rectory of Ross. He died in service at Durham in 1787.
1771	D, B	Theophilus Meredith B.A. Edm. Hall;	Prebendary
1775	F	Theophilus Meredith, A.M.	Because the vacancy occurred when his predecessor moved to a bishopric, he was presented to the living by the King. He died at the Hotwells, Bristol, and was buried at Ross.
1774	B	Charles Morgan, M.A.	
1779	F	Charles Morgan, M.A.	
1775	D	Hugh Morgan, D.D., B.N.C.	
1779	B	Hugh Morgan, M.A.	
1801	F	Hugh Morgan, D.D.	resigning
1801	B	Thomas Underwood, M.A.	<p>Reverend Thomas <b>Underwood</b> was born circa 1801.<sup>1</sup> He married <a href="#">Mary Elizabeth Harvey</a> on 30 May 1826 at <a href="#">Ross, Herefordshire, England</a>.<sup>1</sup> He died on 16 April 1860 at <a href="#">The Rectory, Corfton, Shropshire, England</a>.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>He graduated from <a href="#">Worcester College, Oxford University, Oxford, Oxfordshire, England</a>, in 1822 with a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)<sup>1</sup> He graduated from <a href="#">Worcester College, Oxford University, Oxford, Oxfordshire, England</a>, in 1825 with a Master of Arts (M.A.)<sup>1</sup> He was Vicar in 1838 at <a href="#">Diddlebury, Shropshire, England</a>.<sup>1</sup> He held the office of Rural Dean of Ludlow.<sup>1</sup></p> <p><b>Children of Reverend Thomas Underwood and <a href="#">Mary Elizabeth Harvey</a></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Captain Thomas Nourse Underwood</a><sup>1</sup> b. 11 Jun 1828, d. 1899</li> <li>2. <a href="#">Walter Gregory Underwood</a><sup>1</sup> b. 1 Aug 1847, d. 29 Mar 1914</li> </ol> <p><b>Child of Reverend Thomas Underwood</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Helen Adelaide Underwood</a><sup>1</sup> b. 1839</li> </ol> <p><b>Citations</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">[S4567]</a> Bill Norton, "re: Pitman Family," e-mail message to Darryl Roger LUNDY (101053), 6 April 2010 and 19 April 2011. Hereinafter cited as "re: Pitman Family."</li> </ol>
1839	B	Charles Atmore Ogilvie, D.D.	Memorial and D.N.B.
1873	B	Robert Cobbold, M.A.	
1893	B	Edward Henry Winnington-Ingram M.A. (Trinity College, Cambridge)	Curate of Tavistock 1873-76; Rector of Ribbesford 1876-93 with Bewdley 1892-93; Vicar of Bridstow 1910-19; Archdeacon of Hereford 1910-25.
1910	B	Rowland Tracey Ash Money-Kyrle M.A. (New College, Oxford)	Curate of Portsea 1890-95; Ross 1895-98; Rector of Ribbesford with Bewdley 1898-1902; Vicar of Kentish Town 1902-10; Archdeacon of Hereford from 1923; Canon Residentiary 1925 -

1926	B	Ernest Halden Beattie, M.A., M.C. (Queens College, Oxford)	Curate of Billinge 1900-05; Hoylake 1905-06; Vicar of Trelystan with Leighton 1906-11; Wellington 1911-15; Weobley 1915-19; T.C.F. 1917-19; St Martin, Hereford 1919-25.
1937		Percy Charles Barber, M.B.E (Royal University of Ireland)	Curate of St John West, Bromwich 1906-09; Tettenhall 1909-13; Chaplain R.A.F. 1917-19; Priest-in-Charge All Saints, Four Oaks 1913-19; Rector of Pembridge w. Moor Court 1920-37; Prebendary of Withington Parva in Hereford Cathedral 1936-50; retired to Beaminster, Dorset.
1950		Gilbert Salkeld Stockley, MA. (Worcester College, Oxford)	Curate of St Mary's, Shrewsbury 1923-26; Domestic Chaplain to Bishop of Lichfield 1926-31; Rector of Pontesbury 1931-44; Vicar of Oswestry 1944-50; Prebendary of Withington Parva in Hereford Cathedral 1950; retired to somewhere near Blandford
1967		Raymond John Thursfield (St Aidan's College, Birkenhead)	Curate of Holy Trinity, Clifton 1945-47; Curate of St Paul, Weston-super-Mare 1947-50; Vicar of Mark 1950-55; Rector of Yarlington and Diocesan Youth Officer, Bath & Wells 1955-60; Vicar of Rudby-in-Cleveland 1960-62; Rector of Tarrington w Stoke Edith and Diocesan Youth Officer, Hereford 1960 -67; Prebendary of Hinton in Hereford Cathedral 1965 -
1979		Paul Charles Wheatley, B.A. (Durham)	Curate Bishopston, Bristol 1963-68; Youth Chaplain for Bristol Diocese 1968-73; Vicar Swindon St Paul 1973-77; Team Vicar Swindon Dorcan 1977-79; Archdeacon of Sherborne from 1991. Retired 2003. Died 2024
1992		Roger Stirrup, M.A. (St Catherine's College, Cambridge)	Curate Battersea St Mary 1963-65; Chaplain St Andrews University 1965-68; Chaplain Nottingham High School 1968-80; Assistant Chaplain Rugby School 1980-85; Vicar of Fordingbridge 1985-92; retired 1999
1999		John Bernard Hunnisett, A.K.C. (King's College, London)	Curate Charlton Kings St Mary 1973-77; Curate Portsea St Mary 1977-80; Vicar Badgeworth with Shurdington 1980-87; Rector Dursley 1987-99; Chaplain to Huggens College, Northfleet, Kent from 2007
2007		Sarah Jane Jones, MA Oxon, MA Northumbria, CTM and CTPS (Cantab)	Curate Ross Team Ministry 2004-07; Rector of Ross with Walford 2007-15; Rector of Ross with Walford and Brampton Abbots from 2015. From 2018 Priest in Charge of St John the Baptist, Cardiff
2019		Sean Alexander John Semple, BSocSc (Natal), BTh (University of South Africa), BTh Honours (Natal), MTh (KwaZulu Natal), MSc (Nicosia)	Curate Hillcrest Holy Trinity South Africa & Assistant Priest Pinetown St John the Baptist South Africa 2010-2012; Associate Priest St Helena's Larnaca Cyprus, 2013-2015; Rector, & Vicar, Weobley (St Peter and St Paul) w Sarnesfield and Norton Canon Hereford 2015-2019. 24 <sup>th</sup> May 2024 – Bishop of Cyprus & The Gulf
2025		Prebendary Kelvin Ian Price, Bachelor of Theology (Ripon College, Cuddleston)	Ordained priest, 2011, 2010 Curate at Cleobury Mortimer, Priest in charge Ashfords Benefice from 2013, Rector of Ludlow Benefice from 2016.

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## Appendix 1 Timeline

- 1276 St Thomas of Hereford visited Ross
- 1277 William de Albaniace, first known Rector of Ross
- 1284? to 1300 Part of the Chancel, the Nave and the North and South aisles built.**
- 1300 to 1315 The tower and spire, and the South porch built.**
- 1312 Chantry chapel endowed by Rector John de Rosse in honour of the BVM and St. Thomas, Martyr.
- 1316 Altars dedicated by Bishop of St David's
- 1330 to 1350 The East wall of the chancel, part of the sanctuary, and North porch.**
- 1450 The roof of the South aisle.
- 1485 Thomas Chippenham, Vicar erected a rood screen across the chancel arch.
- 1510 The Markye Chapel and arcading in the South aisle.**
- 1637 Plague in Ross: commemoration of 315 burials on Cross in churchyard.
- 1695 John Kyrle gave the tenor bell (recast in 1770).
- 1721 Greater part of spire rebuilt and three of the pinnacles, largely at the cost of John Kyrle.
- 1726 New organ installed at a cost of £600 on a central gallery under the tower. Further galleries were added on each side of it in 1728. A note in the 1726 register: "This year the organ was setup purchased of Mr W Harris of London, opened October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1726)
- 1743 The nave columns, the roofs of the North & middle aisles, and most of the northern wall rebuilt. Old pews replaced with new (except for John Kyrle's)**
- 1761 Seven bells cast by Thomas Rudhall in Gloucester.

- 1790 “This year the **spire and tower underwent a thorough repair** under the direction of Richard Goodman, architect of Lydney. The spire was taken down about 7 feet and raised something higher. A new weather cock was set upon it and the whole of the tower completely repointed. The expense of the whole amounted to about one hundred guineas.” Note in the parish registers.
- 1820 Rood screen removed. (source? – mentioned in 1984 guide)
- 1826 New organ bought for £250+.
- 1851 At least half of spire rebuilt, after being struck by lightning.
- 1862 Eighteenth century pews removed; Church re-floored; new pitch-pine seats, heating and lighting; two galleries removed; organ transferred from Tower to a new gallery; West window under tower restored.**
- 1867 Sanctus or call bell, cast by J Warner & sons
- 1873 The organ chamber with arch in the South wall of the chancel given by Miss Mary Sarah Hall (who died in 1932, aged 105)
- 1873 East Window restored, as a memorial to Dr Ogilvie
- 1878 Heavy restoration (without a faculty): roofs of the nave and north aisle restored to original pitch and rebuilt; roofs of Rudhall and Markey aisles restored; chancel roof reconstructed to new design; chancel arch raised by six feet; all plaster removed from walls, etc. The three windows above the chancel arch, The door to the Rood loft behind the pulpit. Practically all the tracery in the windows, with the exception of that high up in the West wall of the Markye Chapel. The staircase to the upper storey of the South porch.**
- 1884 Organ rebuilt and extended by Eustace Ingram for £366
- 1895 Markye chapel refitted and marble floor in sanctuary laid.
- 1911 restoration work on spire
- 1921 present organ by Hele completed - the gift of Mrs Edith Purchas
- 1924 Clock & quarter chimes given on bicentenary of death of John Kyrle

1950	Baptistry dedicated, in memory of Mary Elizabeth Done (d.1942)
1952	Spire lowered to height of 205ft when top 25ft rebuilt.
1975	One pinnacle on tower rebuilt
1985	Remaining three pinnacles on tower rebuilt, major restoration of the framework for the bells (re-hung)
1985	Organ pneumatic action replaced with electric – Coulson of Bristol
2009	New boiler house constructed in stone to replace corrugated iron construction
2009	Restoration work on spire and tower - £200,000
2011	Major rebuild of the Hele pipe organ - £90,000
2015	New LED lighting scheme installed
2017-20	<b>Reordering project seeing the removal of all 1862 pews, the addition of toilets and a children’s room at the back of the north aisle (with switching of stained glass in the back two windows), a kitchen at the back of the south aisle and remodelling of the north porch. Total cost c£230,000 for the three phases of the work.</b>
2026	More substantial work needed on three pinnacles and the top of the spire

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## Appendix 2 Documents

### 1834 - Bishop’s Queries and Replies

My Lord,

I proceed to reply to your Lordship's enquiries in the order in which they are printed in the Circular, dated July 30th, 1834.

The Revd. Thos. Underwood M.A. Rectory Ross - Institution March 1801

The Revd. James A Stewart, Curate of Ross Stipend £100 per annum, with surplice fees - about to be licensed

The Lord Bishop of Hereford, Patron



themselves to the performance of the duty, which they had undertaken. An opposition to the projected plan soon arose. The occurrence, unexpected as it was, neither interrupted the efforts, nor in any considerable degree, thwarted the success of the Committee, although it unfortunately occasioned the inconvenience of Legal proceedings, which entailed upwards of a year's delay and a certain amount of expenses.

When, at length, the difficulty was surmounted and a Faculty for the intended alterations issued from the Bishop's Court, the Monies paid and promised were found to meet fully the condition, under which the consent of the Vestry had been given. Accordingly, it was announced that the Plans and Specifications, prepared by an eminent Architect, were ready for the inspection of Builders, from whom Tenders were invited. The terms of a formal Contract with Mr. William Deeley, whose tender had been accepted, were settled, and, on the 18th of August 1862, the area of the Church was entrusted to him, for the fulfilment of his engagement.

While the Original plan was in progress, some additional alterations forced themselves upon the notice of almost every observer, as desirable. It was therefore determined to attempt to raise a Supplemental Fund, for the accomplishment of what was deemed highly expedient, although not included in the General Design. The gratifying result was that ample resources were procured, that two unsightly galleries were swept away, and that the Organ was transferred from the Tower to a new Gallery, erected for its reception.

Out of the Second sprang a Third improvement on the Original Design. The removal of the Organ had the effect of exposing to view, within the Church, the West Window, that had been, in its lower portion, blocked up with stone and, through of the Parish, therefore, zealously came forward; created a Third Fund, for the restoration of this window, under the direction of Mr. Buckler, the Architect; and agreed that the surplus of their Special Fund, if there proved to be any, should be carried to the General Account.

The whole design, thus Threefold in its gradual development, and thus calling forth a corresponding Threefold exercise of liberality, was so far completed by the 4th of January 1863, as to admit of the re-opening of the Church, for the celebration of Divine Service on that day. The interval, which has since elapsed, has afforded opportunities of perfecting several details of the work, as well as of getting in some Arrears of Subscriptions. Nor could the Balance Sheet of Receipts and disbursements be finally closed and audited, in order to be printed for circulation among the Subscribers, before the present time.

RECTORY, ROSS - SEPTEMBER 16th, 1864.

[This is copied verbatim from the printed report that accompanied the Balance Sheet, which showed that the total cost of the project was £1788 16s 11d, and detailed subscriptions ranging from £500 from the Rector, to 1/- from Mrs. Richardson. The

Faculty and other documents relating to this work may be found in the County Record Office in Hereford.]

## Rector's Report after the Rebuilding of 1878

On April 30th, 1878 the Parish Church of Ross after having been closed for a year was re-opened for divine service. The Right Rev. James Atlay D.D. Lord Bishop of the Diocese preached the sermon in the morning from 1 Cor. XVI-22.

After the service a new piece of ground an acre in extent the gift of the Rector was consecrated henceforth to be with the rest of the Churchyard God's acre wherein the bodies of His Servants may sleep until the coming of their Lord.

The evening sermon was preached by the Rev. Thomas Bernard B.D. Canon of Bath and Wells from Acts VII-44 - The offertories during the day amounted to £100:18:2.

It may be well here briefly to record the particulars of the works executed in this restoration.

1. The Roofs of the Nave and North aisle were raised to their original pitch and completely rebuilt, slate was substituted outside in place of the decayed stone tiling.

2. The roofs of the Rudhall and Markey Aisles were restored all the sound timbers being retained, slates were here also used for the roof.

3. The Chancel Arch was raised about 6 feet by the lengthening of the shafts the same stones were retained in the Arch itself. Three small quatrefoil Windows were placed in the East Wall of the Church above the arch to give light to the roof.

4. The North Porch with its side windows was restored and newly roofed and all the ground on the North side of the Church brought to the basement level.

5. The walls were stripped of plaster and pointed with cement throughout.

6. In the Markey Aisle the Gallery was removed the East window completely restored on the old lines and a small West Window looking into the Parvise renewed.

7. In the North Aisle the "Kyrle" Window where the two elms grow was refitted with tracery after a design by the Architect Mr. Nicholson of Hereford.

8. An unsightly window over the South Porch lighting the parvise was removed and a new and appropriate window of two lights inserted the gift of the Rt. Hon. Monatague Bernard.

9. A Turret Staircase was built to form an Entrance into the Parvise, the old entrance by the Gallery having been removed.

10. The Chancel roof was completely reconstructed after a design by the Architect so as to be in harmony with the rest of the Church, labels were inserted over the Chancel Arch and the arch of the Organ Chamber, a new lead roof was constructed in place of the old one of slate. The buttresses were surmounted by pinnacles, new gargoyles were designed a new cross was placed on the East gable and the arms of the see and of the Archdeaconry were cut on the Shields stopping the String courses across the exterior of the gable.

11. During the progress of the work several interesting discoveries were made in the walls of the Church all of which were carefully preserved, namely the two piscinas in the south wall of the Chancel, one of early English the other of Perpendicular date also a doorway in the turret staircase looking eastward also a Hagioscope or "Squint" a doorway leading to the rood loft and a Rood loft stoop for holy water in the East Wall of the Nave Proper also a doorway in the Markey Aisle leading from the Porch.

12. Several improvements of a minor kind were effected in the North doorways of the Church and Chancel, the restoration of the turret staircase leading to the roofs and of the doorway to the same behind the pulpit, the cleaning and renovating of the pulpit and the Communion rails &c. &c.

All these works were executed at a cost of about £4,000 (Four Thousand pounds.) The whole of which was raised by public subscription within two years.

R.H. Cobbold     Rector

A.J. Purchas, R. Brendon     Ch Wardens

A Osborne, F. Cooper     Hon Secs.

This report is taken verbatim (including the uncertain use of capitals and the quasi-legal absence of punctuation) from the account in careful copperplate handwriting in the minute book of the Committee which supervised this rebuilding. The book is kept in parcel 1a in the Rectory Box.

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## Appendix 3 War Memorials

### South African War (brass memorial in the South Aisle)

Monument erected by the Officers,  
NCOs and men of B Coy 1<sup>st</sup> HRV  
in memory of the men who lost their lives  
in the South African War  
1901

Pte. E H ADAMS

Pte. J P SMITH

### World War I 1914-18.

The memorial to those who died in the first World War is on the south wall of the Markye Chapel, and reads as follows:-

DULCE ET DECORUM EST PRO PATRIA MORI

(It is a fine and fitting thing to die for one's country)

1914-18

To the glory of God and in ever thankful memory of those men of Ross who gave their lives in the Great War the Chapel Screen together with this tablet are set up by the parishioners.

(98 names are recorded.)

### World War II 1939-45

On the west wall of the Markye Chapel the memorial reads:-

To the glory of God and in proud memory of the men of Ross who gave their lives in the World War 1939-45.

(43 names are recorded.)

The High Altar was also erected as a memorial of the Second World War. The inscription reads:-

THIS ALTAR WAS ERECTED  
BY PARISHIONERS IN MEMORY  
OF THE MEN OF ROSS WHO  
GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE  
WORLD WAR 1939 -1945

The Altar referred to on the memorial consisted of the present communion table with proper frontals for the seasons, together with riddel posts and hangings in what was called the Old English design. It was dedicated on Sunday 14th November 1948. Riddel posts and hangings were removed in the 1980s.



### **The Korean War 1950-53**

On the south side of the Prospect a memorial tree has been planted, with a stone bearing the inscription:

NOT ONE OF THEM IS FORGOTTEN BEFORE GOD.

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## Appendix 4 Monuments

The memorials set out in this appendix are listed in clockwise order round the church, starting in the North Aisle by the north Porch. The Rudhall Monuments are covered separately in chapter 7.

### North Aisle

#### William Elliott Price MB MRCS

of Chepstow House, Ross, who died on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1903 aged 46; and Clara Eliza Price, his sister, who died on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1902 aged 49.

#### Lt John Thirkill

88th Connaught Rangers, died near Stanger, Natal, 22nd April 1879, from the effects of fever contracted while on active service in Zululand. Erected by the officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the regiment, in affectionate remembrance of a comrade well-loved and deeply lamented.

Mrs J. Kelsall writes:

The brass war memorial to local men who dies in the Boer War is rare. This war was unpopular, especially in agricultural communities, where farmers often identified strongly with the Boer farmers. The agricultural depression at the turn of the century drove many agricultural workers to join the army to fight a war they had no heart for. It is particularly moving to see these brave men honoured here, who died doing their duty, so far from home.

#### John Partridge

who was born in Ross, removed for trade to Monmouth, but retained a great affection for Ross, and did good works. He died a bachelor on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1810 in his 78<sup>th</sup> year, severely affected by gout. The poem at the top of the memorial reads:

To thee whoe'er thou art that vieweth these walls  
The gentle spirit of John Partridge calls,

Bids thee like him (benevolent and kind)  
Veiled with the Christian's robe and humble mind  
Whilst living give and take the bliss that flows  
From others good relief of others' woes.  
Midst joys serene- serene when cares oppress  
Like him in God repose thy happiness.

### **Robert Allen, MA, BCL, FSA**

Sergeant-at-Law, who died on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1854 aged 52.

### **Rt Hon Montague Bernard DCL PC**

Formerly Fellow of All Souls and Professor of International Law at Oxford.

### **Thomas Perrock**

This is the oldest monument in the church. A small white marble tablet in the North Aisle reads:

*Hear lieth the bodi of Thomas Perrock desesed the XXII of November 1605.*

### **Edward Nourse Harvey**

1814-1889, and Sophia, his wife, 1823-1896.

### **Rev John Jones**

the inscription reads:

Spe beatae immortalitatis quiescunt in sepulchreto huius ecclesiae (una cum maternis maioribus familiae Yonge de Merrivale) reliquiae Reverendi Johannis Jones, Cleric.

Obiit die Septembris XXIo Anno Domini MDCCCX aetatis LVo.

(“In the hope of blessed immortality there lies in a vault of this church (together with the remains of his wife's parents) the body of Revd. John Jones. He died on 21st September 1810, at the age of 55.”)

### **Julia Frances Mortimer**

who died at Rudhall on Christmas Eve 1898.

## John Farne

Neare ys place lyeth ye body of John Farne Vintner who was Generally Beloved & Faithful to his Friend & departed ys life in ye true faith of Christ May the 24: 1658

A photograph of 1870 shows that this memorial was moved from the place where the old door to the rood screen was uncovered in the restoration of 1878 to where it now is, between the nave and the north aisle.

## Chancel and Sanctuary

### Judith, Rebecca, and Rachel Bernard.

### Lt Col Basil Jackson:

Royal Staff Corps, served at Waterloo, died 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1889 in his 95<sup>th</sup> year.

### Charles Whiting (and others)

This the tomb stone on the floor of the chancel just in front of the altar rail on the north side. It is now illegible. Dr Charles Whiting was Rector here during the life of John Kyrle and was his greatest friend. We have from Duncumb:

Flat Stones. Arms, Per Pale 3 whittings maient ppr - Whiting

Depositum Caroli Whiting S.T.P. hujus ecclesiae indigni sed amantissimi Pastoris. Obiit Octobris 25 anno Reparatae Salutis 1711. Monendus es Lector paucis hisce Verbis pro Modestia sua Posteris se traditum voluisse Virum Ingenio, Urbanitate, Doctrina et praecipuo egregie concionandi Facultate, ubique clarissimum, et ecclesiae cathedralis Hereford Canonicum Residentiarium.

Juxta requiescunt cineres Catherinae Hipplesley, amicitiae perdilectae. Praedecessit illa. vi Aug: A.D. MDCC. aet 63. Elizabetha Caroli Whiting S.T.P. conjugis optimi per annos 27 Viduae.

Thomae Wottton S.T.B. Ecclesiae Cathedralis, Heref: Canonici, Parochiae de Lugwardine, Vicarii, Filia Unica ob: MDCCXLVIII aetat: 68.

Roughly translated:

Here is deposited Charles Whiting D.D. Loving shepherd of this church. Died October 25 the year of salvation 1711. Readers are warned a few pungent words for his modesty later he had been given a certain desired character, courtesy, his doctrine and exceptional ability to preach was a brilliant. Canon in Residence of Hereford Cathedral.

Resting near are the ashes of **Catherine Hipplesley**, lose the beloved. She predecessor. Aug force, A.D. 1700. 63. Elizabeth to Charles Whiting set S.T.P. best partner for 27 years, a widow.

**Thomas Wotton**, Canon of Hereford Cathedral, Vicar of the parish of Lugwardine, adjutant, the unique account: 1748 aged 68.

## **Robert Morgan**

North Wall of chancel - Copper Plate

Infra Jacet Robertus Morgan  
Roberti Bangorensis Episcopi  
Filius quartus et natu minimus  
In Insula Mona Natus  
In schola Westmonast. Nutritus  
Aedis Xti Oxon: Alumnus & S.T.P.  
Prebendarius & Canonicus Herefordensis  
Necnon Hujus Ecclesiae Fidelis Rector  
Ubi ab A.D. MDCCXII viz 7 Die Apr.  
Officio Parochiali Sedulo Incubuit;  
Sine Strepitu Beneficus Vixit  
Et in manus Dei Animam Pie Tradidit  
  
XIX die Novembr. A.D. 1745

Aetat. S 81.

Duncumb: Elected for his proficiency to a studentship before the usual age. Resided at Oxford as a tutor until 1702, when he was collated to a prebendal stall at Hereford by Bishop Humphrys.

## Thomas Baker

Here lieth the body of Thomas Baker, Mercer  
the late husband of Jane his wife who  
deceased this life to the kingdom of  
heaven the 14 of September 1622

Even such is time which takes in trust  
our youth ovr ioies & all wee have  
and paies vs but with earth and dust

Within the dark and silent grave  
when wee have wandred all our waies  
shutts vp the storie of ovr daies  
now from which earth & grave and dust  
the lord will raise me up i truste

vivat post funera virtus

("May his quality live on after his death")

The verses were written by Sir Walter Raleigh the night before he was beheaded in 1618 and were found in his Bible in the Gatehouse at Westminster.

## John Kyrle (The "Man of Ross")

The wall monument draws attention both to John Kyrle himself and to his cousin Constantia, Lady Dupplin, by whose bequest the tablet was given in 1776. It is a high-quality monument made by someone who is known only by his surname of Marsh, of Bristol and Ross. It is made of coloured marbles, with a medallion portrait, bas relief figures in an oval, and the foliage-draped urns so fashionable at that period. The triangular-shaped marble mount is symbolic of the eternal. Like many monuments and memorials of the period, there is no Christian iconography, the inspiration coming directly from classical Roman sculpture as re-interpreted by the 18th century British. Below the tablet, as a crest to the coat of arms can be seen the earliest of the hedgehogs in the church. For many years the hedgehog was accepted as a symbol of Ross.

John Kyrle's tombstone is in the floor beneath his monument in the sanctuary, and may not be in precisely the right spot, being placed there twenty-six years after his death. Previously the poet Alexander Pope had criticised the lack of any memorial to him.

John Kyrle was born in 1637 at Dymock. He came to Ross in about 1660, the year of the restoration of the monarchy. Out of tolls he received as steward of the Lord of the manor, he used to have bread baked to distribute to the poor each Saturday. He used to settle disputes and helped apprentices and alms-houses. He restored the causeway over the river meadows to Wilton Bridge, and brought a water supply into Ross. He loved the beauty of his own countryside and taught others to do the same. The town owes to him the beginnings of the public park known as The Prospect, just off the churchyard, which has a wonderful view over the Wye and beyond. The Church owes to him the restoration of the spire in 1721, and the distinctive addition of its pinnacles and the tenor bell. He is also remembered for the planting of elm trees in the churchyard, which lasted from 1684 until Dutch elm disease caused them to be felled in 1974. One was planted so close to the church that suckers grew up inside the church in front of two windows. During the 1878 restoration the tree outside was cut down and the sucker died. People were so fond of the growth, that a Virginia creeper was planted, and this still grows from a stone box, filled with soil, at the foot of the window.

## **Elisabeth (Edwards) Morgan**

Now tucked into the far right hand corner of the sanctuary is a memorial to Elisabeth the beloved wife of Hugh Morgan (Rector 1779 - 1801) who died at the age of twenty-five. The memorial is very similar to that to John Kyrle on the other side of the chancel. The triangular shaped marble mount is symbolic of the eternal, and the foliage-draped urn was still fashionable. There is no Christian iconography, the inspiration coming directly from classical Roman sculpture, as re-interpreted by the 18th century British.

The inscription reads:

ELISABETHA

Hugonis Morgan Ecclesiae Hujus Rectoris Conjux  
Et Jacobi Edwards de Dilwyne Gen: Filia et Haeres  
Obiit Die Aug. XXIII A.D. MDCCCLXXXIII, Aetatis Suae XXV  
Virtutem sublatam ex oculis laude prosequi

Solenne est \_ At vale ELISABETHA, tuumque  
Nomen solummodo marmor hoc commemoret,  
Neque enim est ut possit eloqui par aliquid  
dignumque,  
Aut Tui laudibus, aut Mariti desiderio  
- Vale Conjux carissima, amantissima!

Ah! quanto minus est cum reliquis versari quam  
Tui meminisse!

and on the urn above:-

CONJUGI OPT DE SE MERITE  
PONENDUM CURAVIT H.M.

As a vast new Rectory was built about 1790, and Elisabeth was an heiress, it is reasonable to suppose that it was her money that Hugh Morgan used for building it.

## **Dr John Newton**

In Sacello hoc  
Sub rudi lapido obscure latet  
Qui vivus per literatum orbem inclaruit.  
Quantus vir! et quo non Monumento dignus!  
IOHANNES NEWTON S.T.P.  
Insignis Mathematicus!  
Orator Felix!  
Et quod in tabella hac praecipue notandum est,  
Ecclesiae hujus,  
Non solum Pastor nuperus, plurimum dilectus,  
Sed et Benefactor perpetuus, semper memorandus.  
Quippe  
Cujus consilio, operae, impensis  
praecipue tribuendum est  
Quod Ecclesiae hujus patrimonium  
(pro oneris amplitudine

Nimis olim exile et parcum)

Decimis Majoribus tandem

Auctoritate publica auctum sit

A D 1671

Quo Coepto feliciter consummato

Supremum diem clausit

Vir Beneficus et doctus

VII Kal Jan A.D. 1678

Eo libentius ut credibile est in coelum migrans

Quod in terris Boni operis sui fructum non percepisset.

Abi lector!

Et si publico Commodo invigilare gaudes

Magis quam tuo

Hinc sume exemplum.

Hanc tabulam, animo non sine grato, redintegravit Thomas Underwood, Rector AD

1813

*Transation:* In this sanctuary, obscure beneath a simple stone, lie hidden the remains of a man who in his lifetime was renowned throughout the learned world. What a man he was! What monument would be worthy of him!

John Newton STP

A distinguished mathematician, an eloquent speaker, and what is to be particularly noted in this memorial, not only a former much loved minister of this church, but also an enduring benefactor, never to be forgotten. It is specially due to his wise counsel, his hard work, and his personal financial disbursement, that the endowment of this church (previously far too mean and niggardly for the volume of work involved) was with public support considerably increased in 1671. This enterprise happily completed, the generous and learned man died on 25th December 1677. We well may believe that by going up to heaven he saw the fruits of his good work that he did not live to see on earth.

Reader, be on our way! And if it is your joy to care more for the public good than for yourself, take your example from him.

This memorial stone was lovingly and gratefully restored in 1813 by the Rector, Thomas Underwood.

John Newton - unknown artist – National Portrait Gallery

## Dr Charles Ogilvie

In  
Memory of  
Charles Atmore Ogilvie D.D.  
Regius Professor  
of Pastoral Theology  
in the University of Oxford,  
Canon of Christ Church  
and for thirty three years  
Rector of this Parish.  
Born Nov. 20th 1793, Died Feb. 17th 1873  
+  
"The path of the just is as the shining light,  
that shineth more and more  
unto the perfect day."

A major restoration of the church was begun in Dr Ogilvie's time as Rector, in 1862. This involved the replacement of the old box pews, by the present ones together with new flooring; and the removal of galleries at the West end of the church. The East window was restored as a memorial to Dr Ogilvie.

## John Baker

Joh: Baker de Ross in com: Heref : Gen : Henrici Baker de Abergaven : in com. Monm. armigeri filius. Qui cum Elizabetha Gulae Guilim de Langston arm : filia primogens conjugii plus quam decem annos decursum feliciter transegit. Unus tantum de quinq : quas ei peperit Liberi superstes manet. Francesca scilicet. Quibus eodem morbo quo Pater haereditaris nempe Pulmorum Vitio, et quasi ex Traduce obire contigerat.

Credibile est sic Voluisse Mori, obiit xv Sepbris anno absque 37 're' Xtissim'  
1682. Monumentum Hoc, amoris ergo ejusdem Vidua maerens posuit.

## Mary Sarah Hall

THE CREDENCE IN THIS SANCTUARY  
WAS GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD  
AND IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE  
OF MARY SARAH HALL 1827-1932  
A GENEROUS BENEFACTRESS WHO  
DEVOTED HER LONG LIFE TO THE  
SERVICE OF OTHERS AND DEVOUTLY  
\* WORSHIPPED IN THIS CHURCH \*

This brass plate is on the South wall of the chancel just by the altar rails. The Credence is the oak table with a linen cloth to the right of the altar. It is used to hold the bread, wine, and water to be used at the Eucharist, and other accessories of the service.

According to Prebendary Beattie, who was the Rector when she died:

The organ chamber is the valued gift of a lady, Miss Mary Sarah Hall, who lived to the great age of 105, and died in 1932. This wonderful lady was a regular worshipper in this Church until she attained the age of 104, walking regularly the distance of about a quarter of a mile from her home and back.

Miss Hall was born 17<sup>th</sup> January 1827, she donated the organ chamber, which was opened up in 1873. The following are an extracts from the Ross Gazette of 13<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> January 1927 (January 1928?):

<https://herefordshirehistory.org.uk/archive/herefordshire-in-the-great-war/first-world-war-newspapers/ross-gazette/ross-gazette-1928/ross-gazette-january-1928/ross-gazette-13-january-1927/1380850?q=hall>

BORN 100 YEARS AGO. STILL LIVING IN ROSS.



**Miss M. S. Hall on Her Way to Church.**

A hundred years ago to-day, January 17<sup>th</sup>, the stork brought a tiny girl baby to a happy father and mother at Wallace Cottage, Much Birch.

That little baby grew into a woman and she is with us today. We reproduce a picture of her on her way to Church last Sunday morning.

Miss M.S. Hall, of Alton Cottage, Ross, was a hundred years old on Monday. Think of it.

Born when George the Fourth was King, she has lived in five reigns. She was a girl of ten when Queen Victoria was crowned, and a young lady of 26 summers when the Crimea war commenced. What a link with the past.

The Psalmist has said: "The days of our age are three score years and ten." Miss Hall has passed the allotted span by thirty years but her strength has not been "labour and sorrow". Delighting in good works, her long life has been full of the happiness that comes to those who make others happy.

All readers of this page will, I am sure, join the writer in wishing the dear old lady a continuance of the joy of life until she goes to that peace which passeth all understanding.

## MISS HALL.

ROSS LADY'S 100th ANNIVERSARY.

### CONGRATULATIONS FROM THE KING AND QUEEN.

On Monday last, January 17th, Miss Mary Sarah Hall, of Alton Cottage, Ross, attained the 100th anniversary of her birth. Miss Hall, we are very glad to say, is in very good health, and was able to receive the many visitors who called to congratulate her. She was the recipient of numerous letters (including a gracious message from Their Majesties the King and Queen), telegrams, gifts of flowers and other offerings.

### THE KING AND QUEEN'S CONGRATULATIONS.

On Saturday last Lord Stamfordham, the King's private secretary, addressed the following letter to Miss Hall:—

"Sandringham, Norfolk, 15th January, 1927.—Dear Madam, The King and Queen have been greatly interested to learn that on Monday next, the 17th, you will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of your birthday, and I am commanded to convey to you Their Majesties' hearty congratulations on having attained this venerable age. The King and Queen trust that you are in good health, and that you may spend the remainder of your days in peace and happiness.—Yours very truly, Stamfordham."

Miss Hall's neighbours and friends in Ross were anxious to mark such an auspicious occasion as her 100th birthday and a profusion of flowers, fruit, birthday cakes and other gifts testified to their appreciation of the signal event and also of their personal regard for one who, through her long life has done much for the happiness of others. A public presentation is recorded below, and Miss Hall received in addition letters of congratulation from the Ross Rowing Club, the Officers, N.C.O.'s and men of "B" Company, Herefordshire Regiment; the Christian Alliance Women and Girls; the Free Church Council; the local branch of the National British Women's Temperance Association; and the headmaster, staff and pupils of Ross Grammar School. The directors of Lloyds Bank, London, telegraphed their congratulations, and among the wealth of flowers that the occasion elicited was a bouquet from Mr. F. J. Parsons (choirmaster) and the boy choristers of Ross Parish Church in whom Miss Hall has always evinced a great interest.

Miss Hall's visitors included Vice-Admiral Sir W. Reginald Hall, C.B., K.C.M.G., A.D.C., D.C.L., M.P. (nephew) and Lady Hall; Colonel Clifford Hall, C.M.G., D.S.O. (nephew) and Mrs. Clifford Hall; Mrs. Templer (niece) and Miss Elsie Bernard (niece), as well as many other personal friends.

### THE PARISHIONERS' TRIBUTE.

On Monday afternoon a deputation of parishioners waited on Miss Hall to make a presentation. The deputation consisted of the Rector (Rev. E. H. Beattie), Mr. C. Hunt (one of the senior members of the Parochial Church Council), and Mrs. Watson, Mr. T. Matthews and Mrs. Cam, who had been invited to form members of the party, were unable to be present.

Miss Hall received her visitors in the drawing-room, with her being Admiral Sir Reginald and Lady Hall, Colonel and Mrs.

Clifford Hall, Mrs. Templer, Miss E. Bernard and Miss Attlee, who for many years has been Miss Hall's constant companion.

The Rector, acting as spokesman for the deputation with a few suitable words asked Miss Hall's acceptance of a silver coffee-pot which bore the following inscription:

"To Miss Mary Sarah Hall, with the loving affection of the Parishioners of Ross, on her 100th birthday, 17th January, 1927."

The Rector said Miss Hall would receive later an album containing the names of all the subscribers, and as the amount required had been subscribed twice over there would also be a cheque for Miss Hall to dispose of as she might wish.

Miss Hall, who was deeply touched, expressed her pleasure at receiving such a gift from the parishioners and her heartfelt thanks. She felt unable to express all she would like to say, but would through the medium of the "Ross Gazette" address her thanks to all the subscribers.

The presentation coffee-pot was supplied by Messrs. Wall and Son, Ross.

### 99 YEARS IN ROSS.

As stated last week Miss Hall has spent nearly the whole of her long life in Ross. She was born at Wallace Cottage, Much Birch, in 1827, and in 1828 she was brought to Springfields, Ross, and for many years past has resided at Alton Cottage. Her father was the late Mr. James Wallace Richard Hall, solicitor and banker, of Ross, who died in 1860. Miss Hall's mother (who was a daughter of Mrs. Bernard, Springfield) died as long ago as 1838. To the memory of Miss Hall's father, and in testimony of his many public services, the drinking fountain at the junction of Cantilupe Road and Smallbrook Road, Ross, was erected after his death.

Miss Hall's long and active association with all good works in Ross have earned for her the sincere affection of everyone. A striking illustration of this has been provided in the anxiety of all—rich and poor—to subscribe towards the presentation referred to above. The inhabitants of Ross and the neighbourhood unite in wishing for Miss Hall a continuation of health, and they will re-echo Their Majesties' gracious wish that her remaining years will be spent in peace and happiness.

Vice-Admiral Sir William Reginald Hall, R.N., K.C.M.G., is the present Member of Parliament for Eastbourne. He was the principal agent of the Unionist Party 1923-24 and during the war was Director of Intelligence Division Admiralty War Staff.

### MISS HALL'S THANKS.

Miss Hall asks us to give publicity to the following letter:—

"I regret I cannot acknowledge personally all the good wishes which I have received, but I hope all my kind friends and neighbours will accept my best thanks for their generous tokens of remembrance, which are much appreciated.—Yours faithfully, Mary Sarah Hall."

Wanted, wanted, 10,000 dozen rabbit skins; any quantity old rags, bagging and bones and horse hair; also scrap lead and other metals. Best prices paid, W. J. Brown, The Stores, Overcross Street, Phone 69.—Advt.

## Theophilus Meredith

In a Vault beneath are deposited

the Remains of

THEOPHILUS MEREDITH Clerk:

formerly Rector of this Parish

And of DIONYSIA his Widow

In Respect to the Memory of her Parents their only Child erects this Tablet.

Theophilus Meredith was the Rector of Ross from 1771 to 1774.

## Thomas Underwood

M S

THOMAS UNDERWOOD A.M.

ECCLESIAE CATHEDRALIS HEREFORDIENSIS

PREBENDARII DE WELLINGTON

ET RESIDENTIARII

NECNON HUIUSCE ECCLESIAE

PER ANNOS XXXVIII RECTORIS

VIRI INGENIO PERSPICACI ATQUE EXCULTO

INDOLE BENEFICA ET BENIGNA

PASTORIS FIDELIS AMABILIS VENERANDI

AN. N P M LXVIII

IN IESU PIE PLACIDEQUE DECESSIT

IX KAL SEP A S MDCCCXXXIX

VALE DILECTUM CAPUT

CONIUGI DETUR ET LIBERIS

TECUM IN COELO VERSARI

ELIZABETHA MARIA UNDERWOOD

HUGONIS MORGAN STP FILIA

CONIUX QUAM DILECTA MATER QUAM AMATA

SUIS EHEU FLEBILIS OBIIT

AN. N P M LXXIII

XV KAL APRIL A S MDCCCLIV

It appears that Prebendary Underwood married the daughter of his predecessor, Hugh Morgan, the Rector who rebuilt the Rectory, they had a very large family. On the same black tomb slab in the chancel are recorded the names of Elizabeth wife of Hugh Morgan and Anne their second daughter who lived only for days, and two sons of the Underwoods. Hugh William, their fourth, lived from November 1806 to March 1807, and Arthur, their seventh son, lived from May to November 1815. Thomas was born in 1772 and entered Merton College Oxford as a commoner on 17th May 1790 and shortly after became a Portionist of the college. He was admitted as a B.A. in 1794, and on the 9th June that year was made Deacon by Bishop John Butler in Hereford Cathedral, and was ordained priest a year later. He became the Rector here in 1801, and soon afterwards started on the rebuilding of the school on the opposite side of the churchyard, now used as a church hall.

In 1820 he was responsible for the removal of the Rood Screen from the church, and a few years later for the purchase of an organ. In due course, his son also called Thomas joined him here as an assistant Curate, and served here for nine years before moving on to become the incumbent at Wellington, north of Hereford. There is a photograph of a painting of Prebendary Underwood in the lobby to the toilets. The original is said to be in a gallery in London.

## **Nathaniel Hill**

NATHANIEL HILL A.M.  
Concionator celebris  
Johannis Hill de Rosse  
Filius secundus  
Jacet sepultus Maiae 26. 1632

## **Charles de Courcy Parry**

IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
CHARLES DE COURCY PARRY. C.B.E. J.P.  
SOMETIME CHURCHWARDEN OF THIS PARISH  
**WHO DIED ON NOV.19 1948.**

NO FAITHFUL LIFE IS LIVED IN VAIN  
OUR WORK SHALL LIVE ALTHOUGH WE DIE:  
AND ALL OUR POWERS REVIVE AGAIN,  
FOR GREATER, HOLIER, WORK ON HIGH.

### **Ann Frances Webb**

ANN' FRANCESC' FILI' UNIC'  
QU' OCATAVUM AGENS ANNUM EGREGIA INDOLE  
CUM PARENTALES ANIMOS SPE PASCERET EHEU INANI  
FATO ACERBO PR'ITERITA SIC D O M VISUM  
OCCIDIT MAII VIII DIE A D M DCCC VII  
M RENTES POSUERUNT  
JOHANNES WEBB A M IN HAC ECCLESIA ALIQUAMDIE S V M  
ET SARA UXOR IN DIUTURNAM  
SUI DESIDERII ET PUELL' AMABILIS MEMORIAM

### **Andrew Lighton**

IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
  
MY HUSBAND ANDREW  
  
HAMILTON-DIGBY LIGHTON  
  
DIED MARCH 4 1929  
  
I have fought a good fight. I have kept the faith

### **Walter Green**

IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
WALTER JAMES SINCLAIR GREEN  
LIEUT. R.N. H.M.S. FLORA  
WHO DIED MAY 9 1906, ON THE JOURNEY HOME  
AGED 23  
"We which have believed do enter into rest."  
HEB. IV.3

## Markye Chapel

### Elizabeth Markey

M.S. Elizabeth' Gulielmi Markey arm: Uxor is pia. Filia necnon Philippi Cecil de Duffryn in comit: Monmouth arm. Femina morum integerrima, verecundii oris, Anim' Cast', Qu' post annos 13 conjugales feliciter peractus obiit s.p. Dec. 28, 1686.

*M.S. Elizabeth' arms of William Markey: Dear wife. Daughter as well as Philip Cecil de Duffryn in the earl: Monmouth arm. A woman of the most integrity of manners, shamefaced of the mouth, Anim' Cast', Who after 13 years of conjugal success, died s.p. Dec. 28, 1686.*

### John Markey (no longer to be found)

Joannes Markey de Alton Court arm liberalis et urbanus uxorem duxit Benedictam filiam unicam Johnnis Hoskins S.L. ex qua suscepit unum filium Gulielmum et tres filias Isabellam Winifredam et Elizabetham superstites. Obiit mart: 1666, aet. 56.

ARMS: Vert a fesse argt. between 3 mallets or. - Markey

ARMS: Az. 3 hedgehogs or.

*John Markey of Alton Court, a liberal and urbane man, married Benedicta, the only daughter of John Hoskins S.L. by whom he had one son, William, and three surviving daughters, Isabella, Winifred, and Elizabeth. Ob 1666 (Ancestry gives 1657) aged 56 (Ancestry gives 51)*

### Gilbert and Mary Abrahall

Beneath within this Chappel lie buried the Bodies of Gilbert Abrahall, Esq & Mary his Wife, who was eldest Daughter of Iohn Abrahall of Ingeston in this County Esq, together with those of all yr six Children the last of whom was Benedicta Born Oct: ye 26th 1718 A Child of a sweet Temper& Great Expectations. but died Dec: ye 22nd 1725 much lamented by all her Friends. and to the inexpressible Affliction of her Aunt & Godmother Benedicta Abrahall By whom to her mem'ry ys Monument is here Erected April ye 26th A.D. 1729

## **Jane Furney**

The pious Jane Furney was buried beneath this scite on the Festival of St. Innocents, 1730, aged 70 years.

## **Alfred Purchas**

The inscription in the east window reads: To the Glory of God and in memory of Alfred John Purchas

Born Sep 15 1833 Died Dec 3 1901.

## **Thomas Purchas**

The inscription in the south east reads: This window was erected to the Glory of God and in memory of Thomas Whittlesey Purchas of this town, who died November 18<sup>th</sup> 1873, and Jane his wife who died March 19<sup>th</sup> 1866.

## **Ellen Bernard**

The inscription in the central south window reads: To the Glory of God and in memory of Ellen Bernard of Overross who died Feby 16<sup>th</sup> 1898 aged 79 this window was erected by public subscription.

## **Bishop John de Rosse**

IN MEMORY OF JOHN DE ROSSE, A NATIVE OF THIS TOWN, RECTOR OF THIS PARISH  
AD 1312-1318 [it is disputed that he ever was Rector here], BISHOP OF CARLISLE, AD 1318-1331,  
THE SANCTUARY OF THIS CHAPEL  
WAS RESTORED TO ITS FORMER USE AD 1904, WITH THE PROCEEDS OF AN ENDOWMENT  
LEFT BY HIM FOR THE SERVICE OF THE ALTAR OF THIS CHURCH OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Both Fosbroke and Duncomb give 1312 as the date of John de Rosse as Rector, though Bannister, the latest authority, omits his name from the list altogether.

Fosbroke:- Of him Mr. Webb's manuscript speaks thus, from Godwin. "John de Rosse, a Doctor of Lawe was thrust by the Pope into the Bishoprick of Carlisle without any election, and was consecrated anno 1318 and died 1331. He being born in this towne and taking his name from it, left a memoriale of himself, now almost deleted, which you may understand by this - 329, March 24. At Ross, Walter de Morton, Priest, was

admitted to the Chantry, founded (ordinatam) in the Church of Ross by John de Ros, Bishop of Carlisle, vacant and belonging to the presentation and nomination of the same father [in God] to which the said Walter has obtained letters of institution and induction directed to the [Rural] Dean of Ros - 35.Ed.1 license to John de Ros of assigning seventy-four acres in Ross and Walford [to the support of the above Chantry.]”

Duncomb adds that he was Canon Residentiary and Archdeacon of Hereford.

### **James Potts**

To the Glory of God and in memory of JAMES ASHFORD POTTS MB, CM, MRCS, of Palace Pound, Ross, who died March 14<sup>th</sup> 1919. In loving remembrance of his self-sacrifice during the Great War this alter rail is erected by his wife November 1<sup>st</sup> 1920.

Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord- Rom.XII.ii

### **Colonel Oswald Middleton**

The flooring of this memorial chapel was give by his wife to the dear memory of Colonel Oswald Robert Middleton. D.L.J.P. 1929

## **South Aisle**

### **Rev James Mills**

Sacred to the Memory of the Reverend JAMES MILLS M.A. thirteen years Curate of this Parish who died July 12 1834 aged 75 years. Also of ELIZABETH Relict of the above and eldest daughter of the late WILLIAM DUPPA, Esq. of Leominster in this County who died Dec. 25 1845, aged 86 years . God only knows who next shall follow me Reader prepare! perhaps it may be thee.

### **John and Ann Beswick**

In a vault near this spot lie the remains of JOHN BESWICK, Surgeon of this Town who died March 21, 1750. Also of Francis, son of IOHN BESWICK, who died in his infancy. Also of Ann, wife of JOHN BESWICK, who died July 29, 1752. Aged 63 years. Also of Ann, daughter of John and Ann Beswick, and wife of THOMAS APPERLEY of Ross, Surgeon, who died February 25, 1763. Aged 34 years. Her grandchildren and Mr. T. W. Purchas,

of Ross, have erected this Tablet instead of a Memorial Stone, which before the alteration of Ross Church in the year 1862, covered the said Vault.

### **Dorothy Dowland**

A plaque of the vestry panelling reads: "To the Glory of God in memory of Dorothy Dowland."

### **Mary Marfell**

To the Glory of God and in memory of Mary Maria Marfell, widow of George Marfell formerly of Hartleton in this county. For many years she gave largely of her substance to the necessitous. Toiling in the name of Christ to the last she was called to rest from hr labours on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 1898 aged 84. Interred at Hope Mansell. *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Matt XXV 40.*

### **Irene Shawcross**

The window was placed in the u/c arch above to the Glory of God in memory of Irene Shawcross who worshipped here for 30 years and died on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1963.

### **The Pearson Family**

GEORGE PEARSON

BORN JUNE 17 1792 DIED DECEMBER 27 1874

<>

ANNE PEARSON

BORN AUGUST 1792 DIED SEPTEMBER 24 859

GEORGE PEARSON

BORN MARCH 10 1823 DIED JANUARY 26TH 1890

<>

MARIA PEARSON

BORN MARCH 18 1825 DIED MAY 28 1864

TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN MEMORY OF  
ARTHUR HENRY PEARSON OF WARRENDALE, ROSS

BORN NOVEMBER 12, 1858, DIED MAY 6, 1922  
ALSO OF HIS SON GEORGE DE WARREN WHO DIED IN INFANCY  
ALSO OF HIS WIFE ANNE DE WARREN PEARSON  
BORN DECEMBER 13, 1860, DIED DECEMBER 10, 1933