



The Parish Church of St. Margaret (Stratton Sci Margrette)

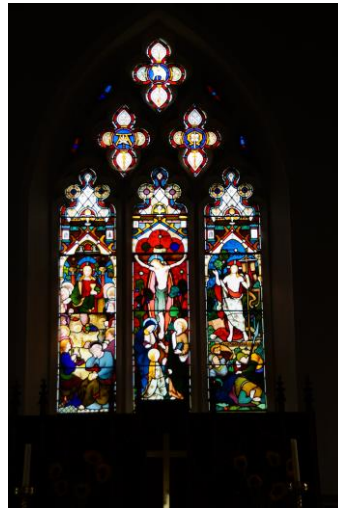
It is believed that there was originally an Anglo-Saxon wattle & thatch church on the site dating back before 1000 AD. It is referred to as Alien Priory at Stratton St. Margaret's, in Wiltshire in Dugdale's Monasticon Volume 6 Part 2. Vol. 6: 1056. A Norman church was built in its place and the current Church of England parish church of St. Margaret of Antioch dates from the 13th century in the reign of [Edward I.](#) (Edward Long Shanks who reigned 1272-1307 AD). Built about 1280 it was eventually dedicated to St Margaret in 1294, the first incumbent was appointed in 1308, Reginald de Altaworth of Highworth), the third vicar Laurentius was believed to be a Stratton man. By order in council in 1852 the vicarage was transferred from the Bishop of Salisbury to the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol. The Parish has been divided in recent times St Barnabus Gorse Hill became its own parish in 1898, St Philip Upper Stratton in 1932.

The church building consists of chancel (area around the altar with stained glass picturing the life of Christ.), nave (with aisles dating about 1280 with 4 bays of particularly graceful arcades supported by slender individually designed round columns with richly moulded capitals of nail head and dog tooth design), organ chamber (originally from 1892 the 1924 replacement pipe organ was removed in 2008) and vestry. The south porch is of the 14th century and has its original roof, the small room over the porch is long gone but its stone access stairway remains. The clerestory and roof over the nave are of the 16th century tie-beam form. There is a western tower with a low spire and a vane. There are numerous later additions completed during Victorian restorations during period 1846-1848 by the architect [Anthony Salvin](#) and partial rebuilding in the middle of the 20th century. A Norman door remains in the north wall along with a recessed tomb. The historian John Aubrey's notes state that there was "a window on the south side of the church wherein is an image of St. Katherine with her wheel ([St. Catherine of Alexandria](#)) and another which he supposed to be St. Margaret". St. Catherine of Alexandria 282-305 was the daughter of King Costus & Queen Sabinella. She converted to Christianity aged 14 and became a noted scholar. She was put to death by Emperor Maxentius after converting members of his court including his wife. St. Margaret of Antioch 289-304 was born to a Pagan priest and on conversion to Christianity was thrown out by her father. After refusing to marry Olybrius the local Roman Governor of what is now Turkey she was tortured and put to death? These were two of the 14 saints who spoke to Joan of Arc.

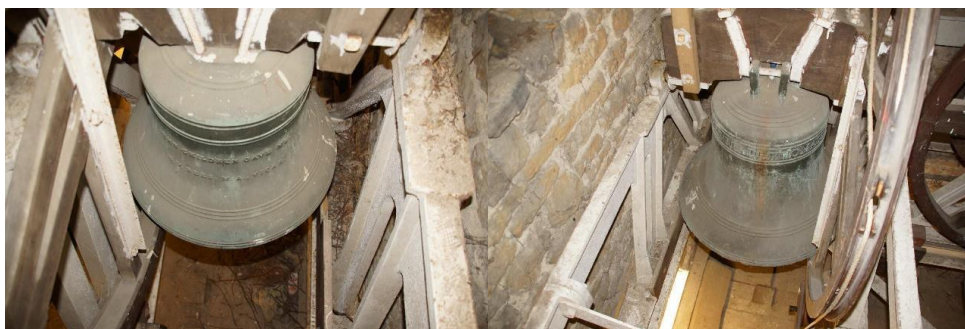


The pulpit is dated 1848 and the lectern to 1896, the font dates from 1860 when the Saxon font (c.1280) disappeared. The oldest of the church plate which is a silver chalice and cover dated to 1570. The organ was refurbished by Messrs Gray & Davidson of London and re-opened 10 Feb 1897.

The tower originally had a flagstaff topped by a gilded cockerel but this was removed in 1962.



In 1553 there were 4 bells, of the current 8 bells the oldest is No.7 cast in 1669 by Edward Neale of Burford and engraved with the Royal Arms. The tenor bell was cast in 1816 by G & G Mears, two more were added in 1909 the 3rd & 4th and a further two in 1931/2, one a new treble was paid for by Stratton schoolchildren and bears the inscription "The children gave me", the other was the 2nd, 2 other bells, the 5th & 6th were recast at the same time' they replaced a 1622 bell by Roger Pardue of Bristol engraved with Prince of Wales feathers and another dated 1669 also by Edward Neale. All the later bells were cast by Mears & Stainbank part of the 'Whitechapel Bell Foundry' which dates to the 16th century. There is also a small sanctuary bell which is not normally used.



Three 17th century monuments are to be found in the north aisle. The first, dated 1645 is of painted wood and commemorates "William Lacy alias Hedges of Kingsdown "; the second is of alabaster and dated 1640; to commemorate his wife Catherine Hedges. The last is a brass to "Catherine Wakeman of Nyth." dated 1649. There are also other plaques and monuments around the walls, one is to Kemble family, another two in memory of former vicar's wives (Goodinge & Nesbitt), two for Day family tomb, one to Rev. Septimus Isaac Crawhill M.A. vicar here, one to Frederick Day, missionary, killed in China, 1912 and one is to William Jones who died in a fire in Southampton.

Quote from local Southampton paper of the time: - "The fire broke out at 11.15pm on November 7, 1837, in the stables of merchants King, Witt and Co whose warehouse fronted on to the High Street 100 yards from the quay. It is hard to imagine a worse place for a fire, for the goods stored there included 150lbs of gunpowder and thousands of gallons of oil, turpentine, resin, varnish and other inflammables. "Then, sometime after midnight, there was a sudden series of explosions which destroyed the floors, roofs and joists and blew out the front of the building. Seventeen men perished immediately, five others died over the next few days and many more were crippled or otherwise badly injured. The youngest of the dead was 16, the eldest 50."

On the south wall, there is now a Brass War Memorial plaque with the list of Stratton fallen.

The parish registers date from 1608. The churchyard has been twice enlarged, the last addition in 1901, when new oak gates were put up. In 1898 there were 350 sittings by 1915 this had increased to 420.

