

# The Church of St Peter and St Paul West Clandon



## Church History and Guide

Please take one  
Suggested donation £2

A very warm welcome to the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, West Clandon. There has been a place of worship on this site for over a thousand years. This building dates back to the late 12th Century and contains within it the marks of succeeding generations, who adapted the church with changing needs and religious trends.

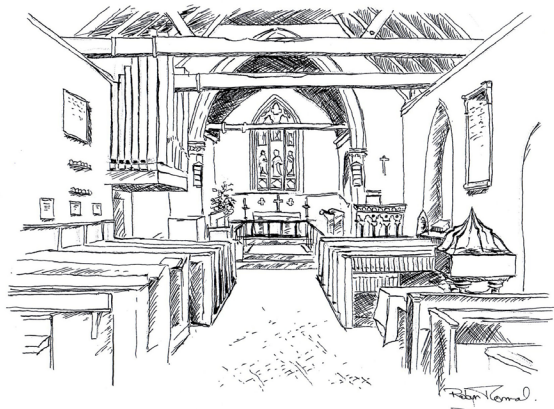
For eight hundred years this building has been the centre of worship in this village, a place in which countless generations have prayed, wept and celebrated. It stands witness to the presence of God in people's lives, both past and present.

We hope you enjoy your time in this beautiful church. As you stand or sit, perhaps take a moment to open your heart to the gift of God's peace. If you want to pray but are uncertain of what to say, there are some words at the end of this booklet which might help.

Thank you for visiting our church. We hope you find this booklet (which you are welcome to keep), something which makes your visit more meaningful.

*Barnaby*

Barnaby Perkins  
Rector



## West Clandon and its Church

The Domesday Book of 1086 records that there was a church on this site and that Edward of Salisbury owned part, if not all, of the village of West Clandon. No description was given about the Anglo-Saxon church, but it would almost certainly have been wooden. No doubt there was woodland on the lower clay land providing building material, but virtually no stone. The name Clandon means Clene Dune (ie downland, clear of scrub). This church is one of a number lying on the land where the chalk downs give way to the clay lowland (ie the "Spring Line").

This church was under the patronage of Henri de Blois, Bishop of Winchester (1120-1171), brother of King Stephen. Henri would probably have commissioned the building of this church when the 12th century Normans set about replacing and enlarging churches alongside their ambitious castle, cathedral, and monastery building programme. Unusually for a single aisle church of this period the Nave is only just over twice its width giving it a welcoming feel. Although resident priests were established in each parish at the same time church records allow us to identify parish priests as far as 1290, the first name being that of Richard de Boclynton. The names of all subsequent incumbents are shown on the board on the south wall.

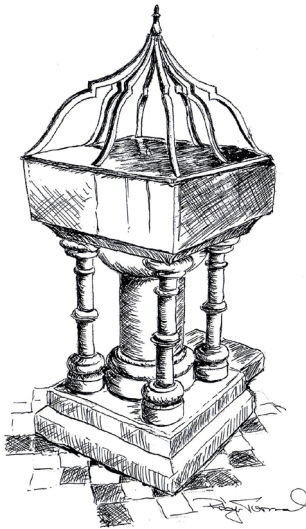
The Knights Templar may have influenced significant changes to the chancel circa 1220. We know that land was given in Merrow to them in 1241 and one of their headquarters was at Temple Court, the present home of the Earl of Onslow. During the 13th century many features were added including a chancel to replace either the Saxon wooden chancel, or a small apse, an unusually large tower, a triple lancet window and the font.

After the Templar dissolution, following their trial for heresy in 1310, the then patron of West Clandon, William de Weston, made further additions to the church. He presented his son to the living in 1349 and added holy water stoups for the parishioners, a sedilia (an alcove with seats for priests) and a window on the south wall which bears his coat of arms of three lions. He also replaced the three lancet windows in the east wall with the present three section window. The current stained glass replaced earlier medieval glass.

There was also a connection with the Augustinian priory at Ripley. William de Weston together with Richard de Boclynton, parson of Clandon, and Roger, Prior of Newark by Ripley, supported by several monks, were the subjects of a Court case in 1319. They were accused of stealing sheep, horses, cattle and swine from the King's Officer at East Horsley.

The ownership of West Clandon included the Westons of Albury (1294 -1441), followed by the Slyfields of Bookham (1441-1638). In 1642 Sir Richard Onslow purchased a lodge and some parkland from the Westons. By 1710 he had acquired the Manor of West Clandon and with it the "advowson" (the right to present a Rector). He exercised this right in 1725 by appointing George Stephens. At present the patronage of the parish alternates between The Earl of Onslow and the Bishop of Guildford.

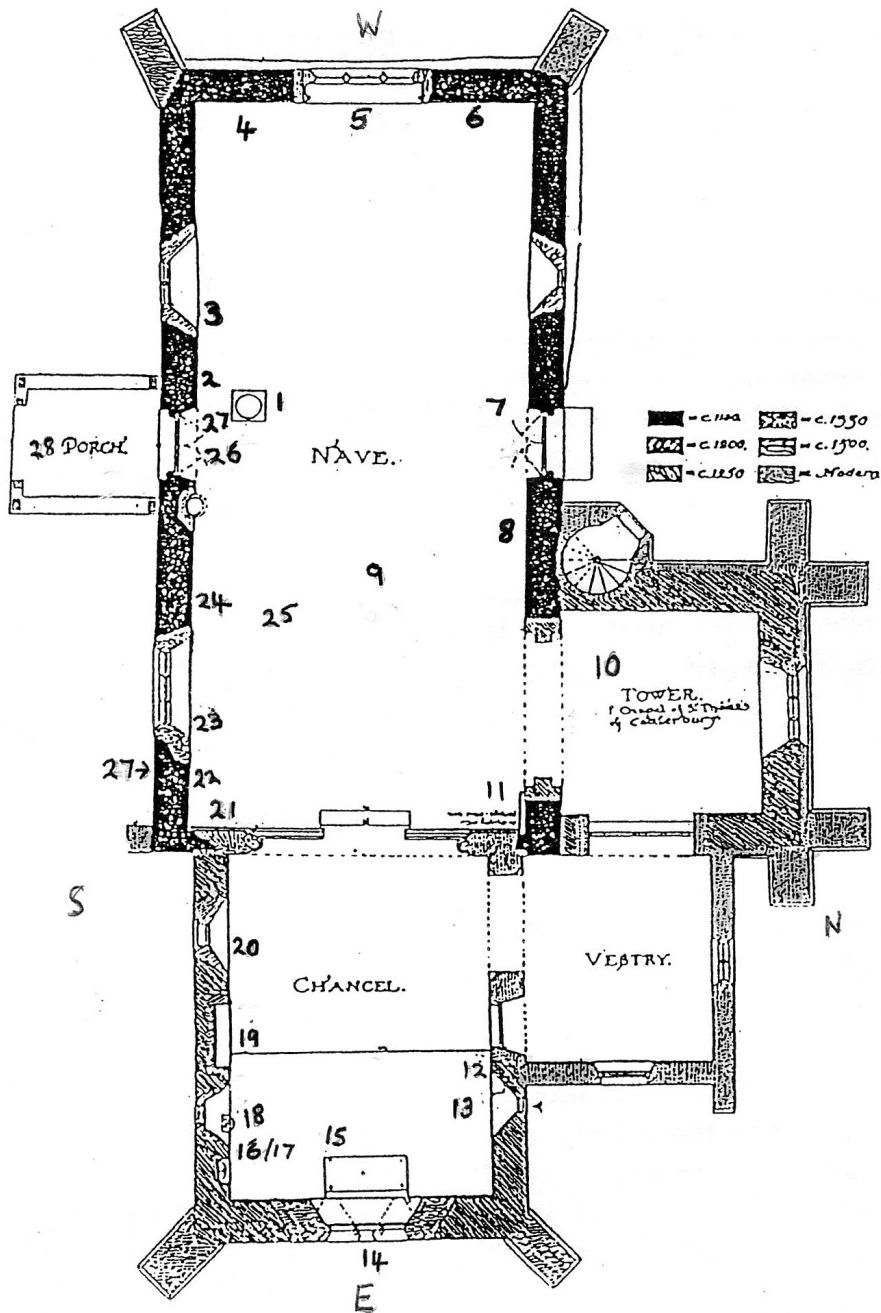
Please walk around our beautiful old church following the numbers on the plan on the opposite page.



**1 The Font:** The font is both at the main physical entry to the church and is the entry point to the church spiritually, with baptism being the start of the Christian journey.

The font is made of Purbeck marble and dates back to 1150 – 1220. After baptism the water, which has been blessed, drains away directly into the earth. The pillars are modern, but the wooden cover dates from the 17th century.

**2 The Incumbents Board:** moving clockwise round the church we come to the incumbents' board. The first Rector Richard de Boclynton seems to have been a rather unruly character. In addition to his alleged livestock larceny, he appears to have been absent in 1297 with the Rector of East Clandon apparently carrying out his duties. This dereliction of duty seems at that time to have been rather common.



Richard de Weston, the son of the Lord of the Manor, became Rector in 1349. One Rector was at some time Domestic Chaplain to the Duke of Gloucester and a further two were Archdeacons. Henry Slyfield (1545) and William Slyfield (1575- 1588 ) were probably sons of the Lord of the Manor at that time. Thomas Russell (1788-1822) was a member of a very important Guildford family and was the older brother of John Russell, this country's foremost pastel artist. John Wenham (1852-1872) has a window dedicated to him, as does Edward Curry (1940-1949). Richard Swanwick Hartley (1918), who was a Naval Chaplain, has a triptych in the chancel dedicated to him by his family.

**3 The Curry Memorial Window:** the first window we come to is a two lancet window. This depicts the Annunciation (Luke 1.26–38) with the Angel Gabriel facing the Blessed Virgin Mary, declaring her blessed among women and announcing that she will bear God, the Word made flesh, in her womb.

This window was commissioned in memory of F Edward Curry (Rector 1940–1949) and his wife and was installed in 1964.

**4 Grave Board:** this recently restored grave board had stood outside in the churchyard for around 150 years. There are very few left in Surrey due to their exposure to the weather. This particular family were very poor, and was continually in receipt of finance from the Overseers of the poor who, with the Rector and Churchwardens, looked after the villagers in need. The boards would have been made by the village carpenter, gravestones being unaffordable.

**5 The Onslow Family Heraldic Window:** this window was placed in the West wall in 1730 and glazed with the various coats of arms of the Onslow family, tracing their history from Henry III onwards. The family motto is “Semper Fidelis- Festina Lente” (“always faithful-onward slow”, a pun on the name On-slow). The family crest appearing on many of the coats of arms includes a Cough, a black bird with red legs. On a number of these crests can be seen the coronet of either a Baron or an Earl. The glass is thought to have come from Cranleigh church.

**6 The Onslow Pews:** these pews or stalls were the gift of an 18th century Earl of Onslow. They are beautifully carved with cherubs' heads, acanthus leaves and cockle shells. They are probably Italian, dating from the late eighteenth century.

The Onslow pews were originally positioned in the archway to the left hand side of the chancel arch and were moved to their present location in the 1870s when the church was substantially restored and re-ordered..

**7 The Clandon Legend:** over the North door is a wooden carving. The legend tells of a dragon living beyond the cottages opposite the church which terrified everyone going along what was then called Back Lane. One day a soldier, who was a deserter from the army and condemned to death, was

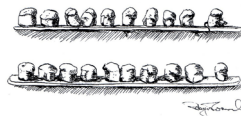
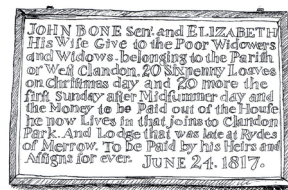


passing through the village with his dog. Hearing about this dragon he offered to set his dog onto the dragon and then kill it if he could be given a pardon. With the help of his dog he killed the dragon in a field called "Dead Acre" and became a free man. Most people prefer this to the alternative explanation. The dog also resembles a lion, and so the Legend could represent the triumph of the Lion of Judah, the Lord Jesus Christ, overcoming the ancient serpent or dragon (the devil).

The dog fighting a dragon has become the symbol of West Clandon.

The original medieval carving (probably a pew end), was stolen some years ago.

**8 The Bread Shelves:** the benefaction board on the North wall provided for sixpenny loaves to be given to the poor and to be paid for out of the property of John Bone who owned a business and land in the village. The shelves beneath were to hold those loaves. Sixpenny loaves hardly sound generous until you realise how expensive corn was during a long period of agricultural depression and the operation of the Corn Laws in the early 19th Century. These shelves are thought to be unique.



The bread on them is real bread! A former parish priest researched and baked these loaves. They were stored in a freezer and brought out every year for Christmas and the Sunday after midsummer day. This continued until everyone realised that the bread was so desiccated that mice didn't want to nibble, and mould would not grow. The bread has been on the shelves for the last 20 years!



**9 Roof Timbers Spanning the Nave:** engraved into one of these beams is the date 1716. Just before the Christmas Service in that year the roof of the nave fell in, probably as a result of water rotting the beam ends at a point next to the tower. Due to the span of the beam, it was necessary to splice new timber at the rotten end and tie new and old timbers together with iron bands.

**10 The Tower Room:** this room, now used for children's Sunday club, was originally built in the 13th century, either as a manorial chapel or as a defensive facility. The stained glass window was placed there in memory of the 3rd Earl who died in 1870 and his wife who died in 1830 by their daughter Cynthia in 1877.

**11 The Organ:** the organ dates from 1965, replacing a Victorian organ which occupied a position in the chancel. The Victorian organ probably replaced a barrel organ which would have been located in the North Gallery. This gallery was demolished as part of the Victorian programme of improvement in the 1870s when the Onslow Pews were moved to the back of the Church.

**12 The Aumbry:** the hole in the wall beneath the small Norman lancet window is where the sacred vessels and the Blessed Sacrament were stored, so that Holy Communion could be taken to the sick and housebound, and to be a focus for prayer. Its lockable door appears to have been roughly torn out, leaving the hinge holes visible.

The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in our church in a new Aumbry, above and to the right of the ancient aumbry. A lamp burns by this to remind us that the Lord Jesus is present with us in the Blessed Sacrament.

**13 Norman Lancet Window:** this is the only original Norman lancet window in the church. It would originally have been shuttered and is understood to have been subsequently glazed with medieval glass. This was later replaced in the 19th century with the present glass depicting a standing figure of a young girl with flowing golden hair. The provenance of this is unknown.

**14 The East Window:** before the 13th century, this was a three part lancet window, traces of which can be seen in the plaster work either side of the present window. The stained glass was installed in 1874 and is believed to have been paid for by Lady Onslow in memory of members of the Onslow family who died in the early to mid 19th century. The window shows St Peter holding the crossed keys, and St Paul holding a sword, standing with right hand raised (reflecting the church's dedication of Ss. Peter and St Paul). Between the two great Apostles stands the Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd, carrying a lamb over his shoulders, reminding us that at the heart of the Churches life is a gentle Saviour, who seeks us, and draws us into a life giving relationship with God.

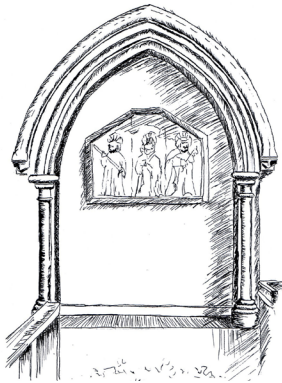


**15 The Communion Rails:** the rails, made of mansonia walnut, were installed in 1961 in memory of Margaret Tanner.

**16 Piscina:** this lofty but shallow piscina, possibly used by the priest for washing his hands, is dated around 1330.

**17 Small Inset Piscina:** this was probably used to wash the chalice and is also dated 1330.

**18 Lancet Window:** this was originally made of chalk clunch, but subsequently replaced with bath stone and would have been fitted with wooden shutters when it was installed in the 13th century. The female figure represents Hope. The dedication "in memory of a beloved sister, S A H" was probably installed in the latter half of the 19th Century. Its provenance is unknown.



**19 Sedilia:** this early 13th century seat for priests, recessed into the wall is unusually large for a small church.

The medieval triptych depicts St. Peter and St Paul (again, identifiable by the crossed keys of the kingdom of heaven, and the sword by which St Paul was martyred). Between them stands an unidentified bishop, possibly St Thomas of Canterbury to whom the parish church in East Clandon is dedicated, though this is not certain.



This could have been part of a reredos, a pannel behind the altar, or (more likely) a pannel from a rood screen. The pannel seems to have been removed by parishioners, possibly during the iconoclasm of the Reformation, hidden, and rediscovered during the Viscotrian restoration of the church.

**20 The Wenham Window:** the window depicts the presentation of Christ in the Temple. It features Simeon with the Holy Child on his lap, the elderly Anna, Joseph, and the Virgin Mary kneeling. It is in memory of John Wenham (Rector 1852-1872) and his wife Susan and was installed around 1874 when substantial changes were made to the church.

**21 Pulpit:** this was installed in 1874, replacing the previous Jacobean wooden pulpit. The stone is believed to be French.

**22 Pillar Piscina:** the piscina by the pulpit is very unusual and there are very few of these in Surrey. It is thought to have been influenced by the Crusades and dates back to the 12th century.

**23 Window of three lights and tracery:** originally lancet windows dated 1250, this was altered in 1874 with Gothic tracery and the Weston family crest at the apex.

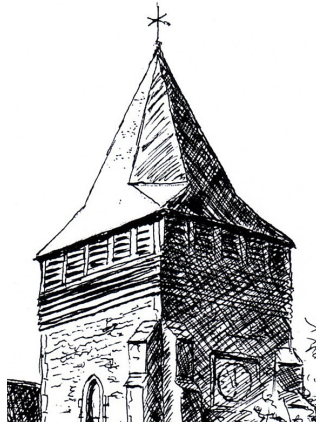
**24 Benefaction Board:** this is headed by Henry Smith whose enormous charity is still distributing benefits to a large number of worthy causes, and continues to give money to the poor of the village today.

**25 Pews:** the pews were originally much higher than they are now and were provided with doors to keep out draughts, but when gas heating was installed around 1874 exposure to the cold was less. Holes in the top of some of the pews can still be seen where gas lamps were placed. When these pews were originally put in it became necessary to cut back the holy water stoups, thus spoiling these medieval features.

**26 Doors:** the South and North doorways are the oldest features of the church, dating to its construction in the twelfth century. The oak South and North doors are identical and are thought to date from the 17th century. Although modern locks have been fitted, the original wooden locks have been retained.

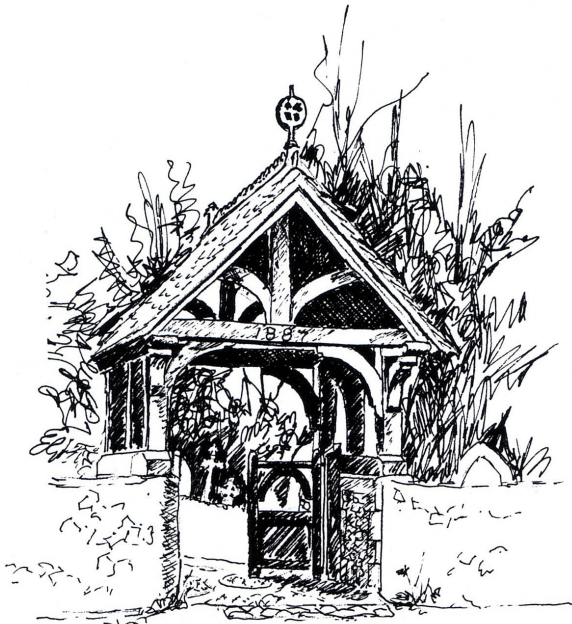
**27 Scratch Dial:** The most interesting and elaborate dial of those which exist in Surrey outside the church, on the South wall. It consists of several concentric circles and, although the gnomon is missing, it is thought to have both indicated the time of day throughout the year and also the times of the services.

**The Church Bells:** the wooden upper structure of the tower caught fire in 1913. The heat caused the six bells to melt and they had to be recast in 1914 by a London Foundry after a substantial amount of the tower was rebuilt. Two more bells were added in 1932 making the present peal of eight bells, an unusual number for a small country church.



**The West Clandon Tower Clock:** the clock is an important part of horological history and by a miracle escaped damage in the 1913 fire. It was made by Thwaites and Reed of Clerkenwell in 1880 and given to the Church by Rector Harkness (1872-82) in memory of his wife. A key part of its mechanism, the “double three legged gravity escapement”, was designed by a Mr Denison, (later Lord Grimethorpe). This separates the clockwork from the pendulum, which is nine feet long, and is driven only by gravity which does not change with weather or friction in the clock. It is therefore very accurate. In 2004 smaller weights wound automatically by electric motors replaced the original three 3/4 ton weights which needed to be lifted from the ground to the top of the tower each week.

The clock strikes a Westminster Chime, the familiar chime of “Big Ben” in London



Raymond

Lych Gate