

Study St Mary's Churchyard

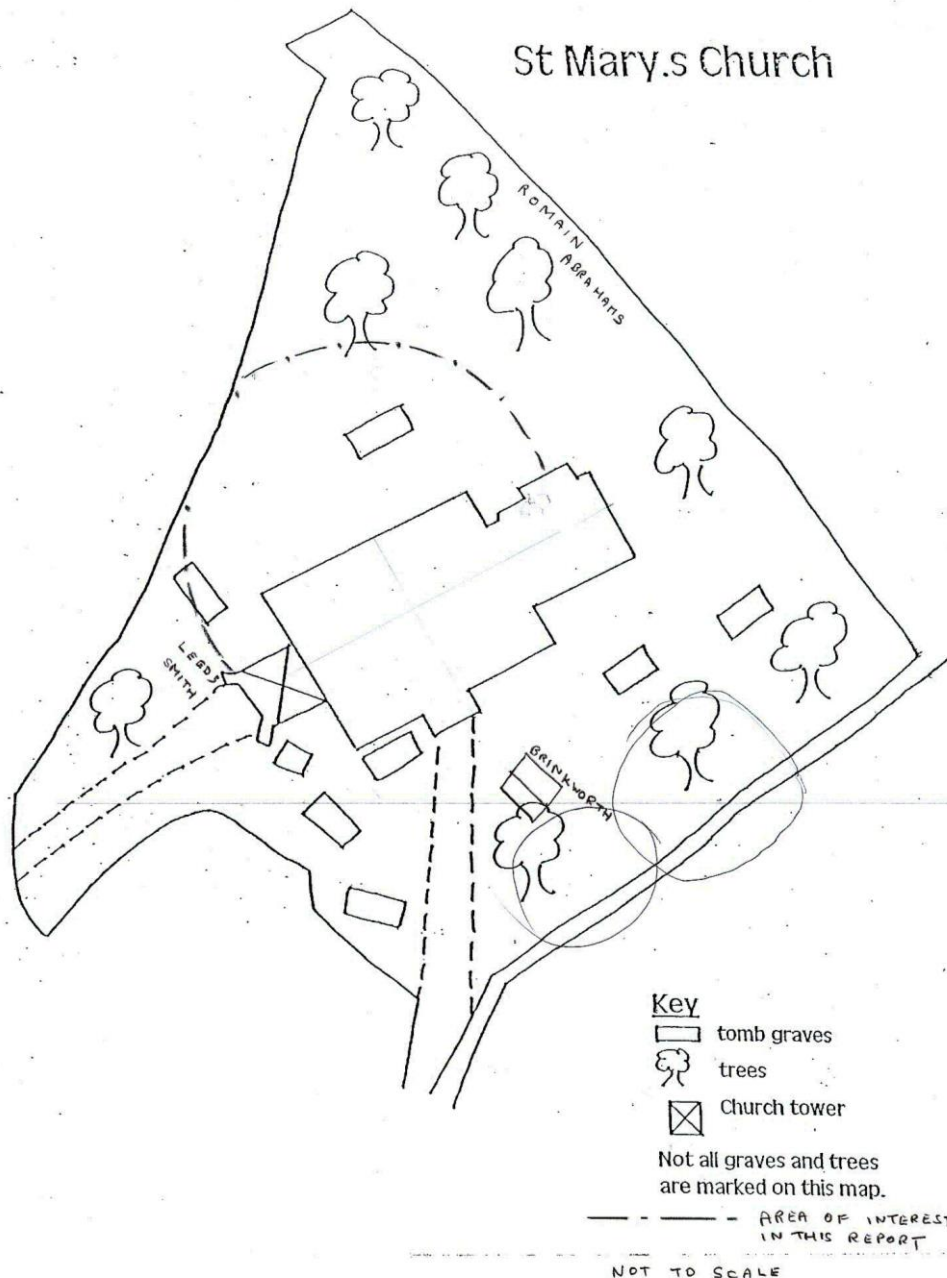
1 Introduction

This study was carried out by Stephen Brazier and Tony Scorer as a result of issues raised at the briefing by short-listed architects, see: *Notes from architects' presentations to the St Mary future group - 6 October 2010*

The objective of this document is to look at recent burial activity in the churchyard that might be affected by any building works on the north side of the church. The previously commissioned Historic Assessment (Section 4) has been studied and visits made to the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre (WSHC). The Wiltshire Family History Society has been contacted and the Monumental Inscription record produced by them has been inspected on fiche at the WSHC.

2 Plan of Churchyard

This sketch is included for illustrative purposes only. It is not to scale and the locations of tombs are only approximate. Note the names of identified tombs/burial areas.



3 Burials in the Churchyard

3.1 From the Burial Records

These records have been taken from the Burials fiches stored at the WSHC (1656/20 Envelope 18 Fiche of pages 118 to 123)

Date	Name	Comment
27 Aug 1936	Robert Brinkworth	Of 40 Victoria Road by Vicar of Hartlepool, Co. Durham. The tomb to the right of the path to the south door
Dec 21 1926	Emily Brinkworth	40 Victoria Road. the tomb to the right of south door path
19 May 1910	G Smith	Tomb beside path to West door
27 Aug 1907	Thomas Badger	Churchwarden
Dec 1906	Mary Ann Romain	Romain gravestones beside Commercial Road wall
Jan 1906	Elizabeth Smith	? Tomb beside path to West door
8 Oct 1905	William Romain	Romain gravestones beside Commercial Road wall
Apr 1905	Sarah Romain	Romain gravestones beside Commercial Road wall
Oct 1904	Mary Hitchins	
Feb 1903	Harriet Matilda Reynolds	
Dec 1901	Hannah Abrahams	Abrahams grave by Commercial Road wall
April 1900	George Pile/Pike	
Jan 1 1900	Susannah Leeds	Died 27/12/1899
Oct 1895	William Romain	Romain gravestones beside Commercial Road wall
Oct 1895	George Pile	Age 25
Sep 1895	John Gibbons	
Apr 1895	Frances Leeds	Leeds memorial to north side of path to West door
Mar 1895	John Romain	
May 1892	Selina Plank	
Jan 1892	Jane Reynolds	See July 1885
Apr 1891	Ann Leeds	Leeds memorial to north side of path to West door
Feb 1890	Sarah Romain	Romain gravestones beside Commercial Road wall
Aug 1899	Samuel Fox	
Jan 1888	William Mundy	
Aug 1887	Thomas Brinkworth	the tomb to the right of the path to the south door
Aug 1887	Sarah Arnold	
Mar 1886	Mary Glass	
Dec 1885	Susan Godwin	
Dec 1885	Ruben Perrett	
July 1885	Stephen Reynolds	See Jan 1892
June 1885	Eliza Iles	
Sep 1884	Emma Brinkworth	the tomb to the right of the path to the south door
July 1883	William Christian Smith	Tomb beside path to West door
Dec 1883	Hester Salter	
Apr 1882	Thomas Romain Oakford	Romain gravestones beside Commercial Road wall
Jan 1882	Mary Cannings	
1881		7 Burials
1880		2 burials
1879		6 burials
1878		38 burials
1877		30 burials

No other documents consulted at the WSHC e.g. 1656/29 1656/30 189/5 add to this information.

3.2 Tomb locations where visible

Names on graves by the West Door path: Ann Bramble, Selby, Tayler, Weston, Dyke, Caroline Hill Jan 1883, Pontbury, Hayden, Coward

Note that the existence of an inscription does not mean the body is interred here but could be in the Cemetery,

Names on stones close to the Commercial Road wall: Daniel Abrahams, William Bull, a number of Romains; Woodman, Randell, Wentworth, Bunyard, John Gibbons, Allen

Names on South side of the church: Brinkworth

The box tomb within the area of interest has no inscription still visible with which to identify those interred.

Salisbury Diocesan Registry were contacted and they say that they "have checked our information available and all burial records are held by the parish and archives would now be held at Chippenham"

Registry Email: registry@salisbury.anglican.org Anita Jeans anita.jeans@battbroadbent.co.uk Tel: 01722 411141

4 Extracts from *St. Mary the Virgin, Devizes. Historic Building Assessment* by Matthew McMurray

Note that the section references here are those of the original document.

4.9 The Churchyard

4.9.1

Up until the early 18th century no reference to the churchyard was found in the churchwardens accounts, presumably as there was little or no work done on its improvement. This however all changed and the 18th century saw significant changes made for the beautification of the churchyard.

4.9.2

The first item in 1715 is for "Ploughing and seed and sewing the churchground £1 4s 0d",²⁹⁸ and this may account in part for the absence of earlier memorial stones. It must be stated though that the churchyard is usually referred to as such and this may possibly be another piece of land. This was followed in 1717/18 by "Pd for stone sand and labour and beere at levelling the fives place & other parts of the Churchyard £5 10s 8d"²⁹⁹

4.9.3

It might be assumed that St. Mary's in the years up to 1400AD, when St. John's seems to have taken over as the main church, had a much larger churchyard than the rather irregular plot that now exists; and that like the large compound of St John's the town encroached upon it. This however is unlikely to be the case due to St. Mary's position in the town plan. The eastern boundary of the churchyard marks the location of the town ditch, which now runs under Commercial Road. Indeed in 1727 there is a payment for the repair of the churchyard bank.³⁰⁰ Map evidence would suggest that the western boundary probably did see some encroachment by the rear section of the castle Inn, the original boundary, probably marked by the rear of the courtyard as shown on the 1880 1st Edition Ordnance survey map (figure 49). Encroachment has probably also occurred on the northern boundary as well. Dore's map 1759 (figure 50) and examination of current aerial photographs suggest that the churchyard's original boundary was with the garden of Brownstone house. The cottages now at the north corner of the churchyard are named 'Phipps Court' on the 1880 OS map and this may suggest that they were built, and the land sold off, in the 1830's when Mr Phipps was the Rector. The Southern boundary most likely remains unchanged.

298 WSRO 189/2, 1715

299 *ibid.* 1717/18

300 *ibid.* 1727

4.9.4

In 1724 payments began to be made to "Mr Styles [a gentleman from his title] two years Rent for the upper end of the churchyard 6d".³⁰¹ By 1733 this piece of land was in the possession of Mr Gordon³⁰² and in 1751 Mr Willey³⁰³ and in 1771 had been transferred to Mr Sutton.³⁰⁴ The last recorded entry for the payment of the rent on this piece of land is to Mrs Sutton in 1804, "7 years quit rent 1s 9d"³⁰⁵ and it may well be that the land was gifted to the church at that time though no record of this could be found.

4.9.6

The import of sand and stones into the churchyard in 1731, at a cost of over £1 6s for its transportation³⁰⁶ probably signified either the creation of new walks or the substantial rebuilding of those already existing. By 1742 we know that at least one of the walks from the church door was fashioned from pitched stones³⁰⁷ and that more walks were completed in this fashion in 1743³⁰⁸ and it would seem that this may have been the case here.

4.9.7

Throughout the proceeding years of the 18th century the churchyard continued to be maintained with sometimes significant amounts being paid for unspecified 'work done in the churchyard'. There were also a number of items relating to the purchase and care of trees including the purchase of soil [probably night soil] for the trees³⁰⁹ and thorning and cutting³¹⁰

4.9.8

Between 1750 and 1789 rent was paid to the Rector for the Churchyard. It may well be that this payment constituted part of his stipend much as Pew rents would have. In 1750 Mr Wells received 12s for one years rent³¹¹ which by the time the last payment is made in 1789 to Mrs Innes (wife of the rector who died that year) it had dropped to 10s for two years.³¹²

4.9.9

In 1750 the walks were improved again, but this time using gravel³¹³ instead of pitching and the steps, possibly those leading to the west door, were built or St. Mary's church, Devizes. Historic Building Assessment – Matthew McMurray 35 repaired.³¹⁴ It may be that pitching was no longer considered fashionable as in 1761 John Powell was paid 2s for "pulling up the old pitching"³¹⁵ and Uriah Aust was paid £17 7s 2d "for paving stones used in the Church yard"³¹⁶

301 ibid. 1724

302 ibid. 1733

303 ibid. 1751

304 WRSO 543/5, 1771

305 ibid. 1804

306 WRSO 189/2, 1731

307 WRSO 543/4, 1742 p.64.

308 ibid. 1743 p.70

309 WRSO 189/2, Dec 26th 1732

310 ibid. August 12th 1733

311 ibid, 1750

312 WRSO 543/5, 1789

313 WRSO 543/4, 1750 p.160

4.9.10

1769 saw a small alteration to the southern entrance to the churchyard, brought about through, what appears to be a land swap as part of the expansion of the Castle Inn. In exchange for taking a portion of the churchyard to expand the inn the church was given 4-5 feet of land on the opposite side of the entranceway enabled by the demolition of the house on that corner.³¹⁷

4.9.11

in June 1782 2 men four horses and a wagon were employed to bring loads of sand and stones, including one shipment of 8 tons 17 lbs of stones, into the churchyard at a total cost of £6 12s 8d,³¹⁸ presumably again to refashion the walks. Then in 1787 James Greenland was paid for "paving in Church and Church yard £7 18s 7½d."³¹⁹

4.9.12

Although the majority of the churchyard in the 18th century appears to have been surrounded by pales, and a wooden fence,³²⁰ it would seem that there was also a wall, but it is unknown where it may have been located. In 1795 James Greenlands was paid for its repair as well as "Halling and Mortar &c for Do £4 13s 4d",³²¹ and in 1811 Mr Rebbeck was paid £15 "towards ye Churchyard Wall".³²²

4.9.13

The pales in the churchyard had needed topping up with soil roughly every 20 years, but the last repairs were made in 1820 by Thomas Milsom.³²³ Three years later in 1823 it seems that a wall was constructed along the boundary with what is now Commercial road and iron railings³²⁴ were erected along the south eastern boundary creating the footpath which is still present. It began in April with the purchase by Mr Crocker of stone bought at the Burgess's sale for £1 3s 3d. The wall was constructed through June beginning on the 12th when Mr R Hughes was paid £4 10s 8d for lime³²⁵ and then Messers Harrison and White were paid £13 18s for "coping to wall in Churchyard" on the 25th.³²⁶ The new fence was supplied by Mr White on 1st July for the princely

sum of £50 10s 3d³²⁷ Two years later William Kitchen was paid for "Painting done in the churchyard £4 18s 10d³²⁸ which must have been for painting the new railings.

4.9.14

Ten years after their installation the railings were complimented by a new set of gates, to the south entrance to the churchyard, supplied by Thomas White in July 1833. "A pair of Ornamental Iron Gates for Church yard with Gothic Columns and arches wt 11c 2q 6lbs ... £32 7s".³²⁹ These are the present gates

314 *ibid.*

315 *ibid.* 1761.

316 *ibid.*

317 *ibid.* Vestry 13th February 1769

318 WSRO 543/5, 1782

319 *ibid.*

320 At one point the town crier is paid for crying the theft of the fence.

321 WSRO 543/5, 1795

322 WSRO 543/7. October 1811

323 *ibid.* 1820

324 Although in the account this is listed as a 'fence' it was purchased from Thomas White who was an ironmonger.

325 WSRO 543/7, 1823

326 *ibid.*

327 *ibid.*

328 *ibid.* 1825

329 WSRO 189/3 (1of2) Thomas White voucher March 28th 1834.

4.9.15

The constant changes to the churchyard in the 18th century, the importation and removal of soil and rubble, as well as the effects of the weather, seems to have resulted in a build up of soil against the walls of the church on the north and east sides. In October 1839 this was dug out and some of the graves were repaired at a cost of £7 10s 7d.³³⁰ This was followed in July the following year by three instances of men being paid to remove more earth from the churchyard.³³¹ In a tour of the church given by Dr Burgess to the members of the British Archaeological Association in 1879 he stated "I am told by one of my churchwarden's that some years since foundations were discovered leading north-east across from the chancel to the buildings adjoining the churchyard which were considered to be either the site of an old church or chapel.³³² It would seem logical to assume that it may have been during this work that these 'foundations' were discovered (see also 4.2.5a).

4.9.16

It is not until June 1910 that we have any further information on alterations to the churchyard, when W Hawkins was paid £2 15s for "levelling the N Side of Ch'yard".³³³ This was followed the next year by a payment for "lowering levelling and trenching at SE Corner of Churchyard preparatory to sewing it with grass seed £1 19s 6d".³³⁴ and in 1912 Mrs Knighton's foreman was paid £1 1s for "trenching and levelling NE corner of Churchyard and approaches to the church".³³⁵ This work was first proposed in 1904 as the churchyard was commented on as "not being in a desirable condition", but there seems to have been both financial and legal restrictions which had to be resolved before the work could be undertaken.³³⁶

4.9.17

By 1929 the commercial road wall had clearly become unstable and was in need of "immediate attention". Tenders were put out and the contract given to Mr G C Boyce at £12 8s 6d.³³⁷ This is probably the current wall.

4.9.18

1939 The path from the west door to New Park Street was relaid, using the existing stones and the narrow path leading from the south to west doors was relaid and widened to 4 feet.³³⁸

330 WSRO 543/7 11th October

331 *ibid.* July 11th 17th and 31st 1840

332 Brock, L. 1881, 124

333 WSRO 1656/29, 10th June 1910

334 *ibid.* 11th-21st January 1911

335 *ibid.* 4th November 1912

336 WSRO 189/5 5th April 1904
337 WSRO 1656/36, Finance committee 24th October 1929
338 WSRO 1656/37, Finance committee 19th January 1939

7.2 Wiltshire & Swindon record Office (WSRO) now Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre (WSHC), referred to in the study.

632/170 Parish Magazine 1939-1986
189/1 Accounts. Mainly Single documents for each year, include receipts from rent of church lands 1499-1633
189/2 Account book 1633-1734
189/3 Vouchers to Accounts 1824-1845
189/4 Minute book [vestry], part only of a badly damaged volume 1808
189/5 Minute book [vestry] 1833-1928 <<note that this contains no record of burial fees and permissions>>
189/33 Correspondence of churchwardens and overseers (178 documents) 1826-1839
189/34 Six files of deeds of various properties mainly in Old Port, Devizes. 13th century - 1467
543/3 Accounts 1557
543/4 Account book 1737-1768
543/5 Account book, ... 1768-1806
543/6 Account 1772-1773
543/7 Account book 1807-1859
543/8 Account book, rough drafts 1868-1870
1656/29 Account book ... 1901-1923
1656/30 Faculties 1915-1948
1656/31 Architect's report on death watch beetle in the church 1949
1656/36 Minute book [PCC] 1920-1931
1656/37 Minute book [PCC] 1931-1942
1656/38 Minute book [PCC] 1942-1952
1656/39 Account book 1958-1971

D1/61/8/15 Devizes St. Mary: To refit and restore church ... 1854
D1/61/42/9 Devizes St. Mary: to place stained glass window in east end of church 1906
St. Mary's church, Devizes. Historic Building Assessment – Matthew McMurray 47
D1/61/74/17 Devizes St. Mary: To install a heating apparatus ... 1931
D1/61/89/1 Devizes St. Mary: to install electric organ blower 1940
D1/61/97/129 Devizes St. Mary: To install electric lighting ... 1948
D1/61/119/11 Devizes St. Mary: Installation of new oil firing heating system 1966
D1/61/139/185 Devizes St. Mary: re-wire electrical system ... 1988

5 Summary

As is noted in the historic building assessment, the churchyard has been subject to constant change with the importation of earth and the gradual reduction in size as building has been permitted within the original churchyard bounds.

The numbers show that burials in St Mary's Churchyard mainly ceased in 1878 on the opening of the Devizes and Roundway Joint Burial Board Cemetery near Quaker's Walk, with its first interment on 9 October 1878. However a number of internments have been recorded subsequently. These exceptions would seem to have been allowed because of a family link between the person and an existing tomb.


Some names re-occur in the post 1878 list e.g. Brinkworth, Romain, Smith, Leeds, Reynolds; account for a half of the 36 names.

No proper burial location layout plan has yet been identified. However all burials since 1907 are well away from the proposed building location.

6 Historic assessment pictures, now" pictures Oct 2010



John Buckler's view of St. Mary's from the North East in 1809. Note the large 15th century east window and the curve of the lintell above the blocked north door to the chancel.


	Date:	18/07/2009	Illustrator:	MSM
	Source:	Edward Dore's map of Devizes, 1759		



Note that the view of the church is obscured by the new growth of trees. There is no evidence of the wide path to the east of the church which appears to run downhill rather than uphill.

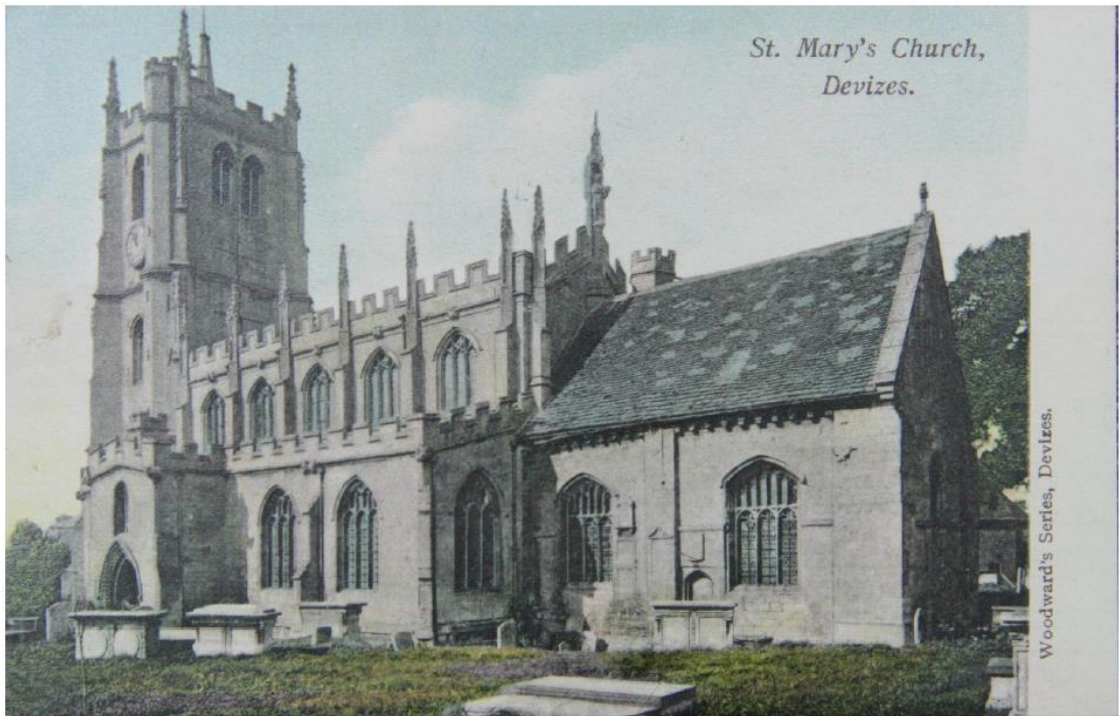


John Buckler's view of St. Mary's from the south west, 1805


	Date:	18/07/2009	Illustrator:	MSM
	Source:	Reproduced by kind permission of the Wiltshire Archeological & Natural History Society		



Note that the original view is no longer possible due to the extension into the churchyard by the Castle Public House. The old wide path has also disappeared, probably under the castle Hotel.

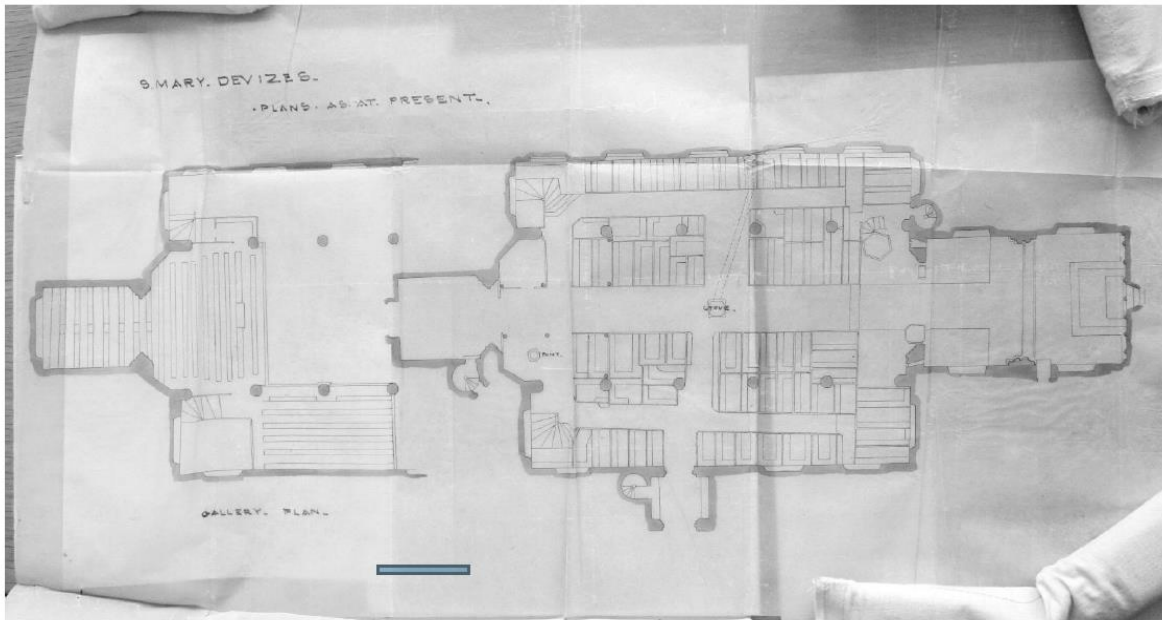


Late 19th century photograph taken from the south east.


	Date:	18/07/2009	Illustrator:	MSM
	Source:	Reproduced by Kind permission of the Wiltshire Archeological & Natural History Society		

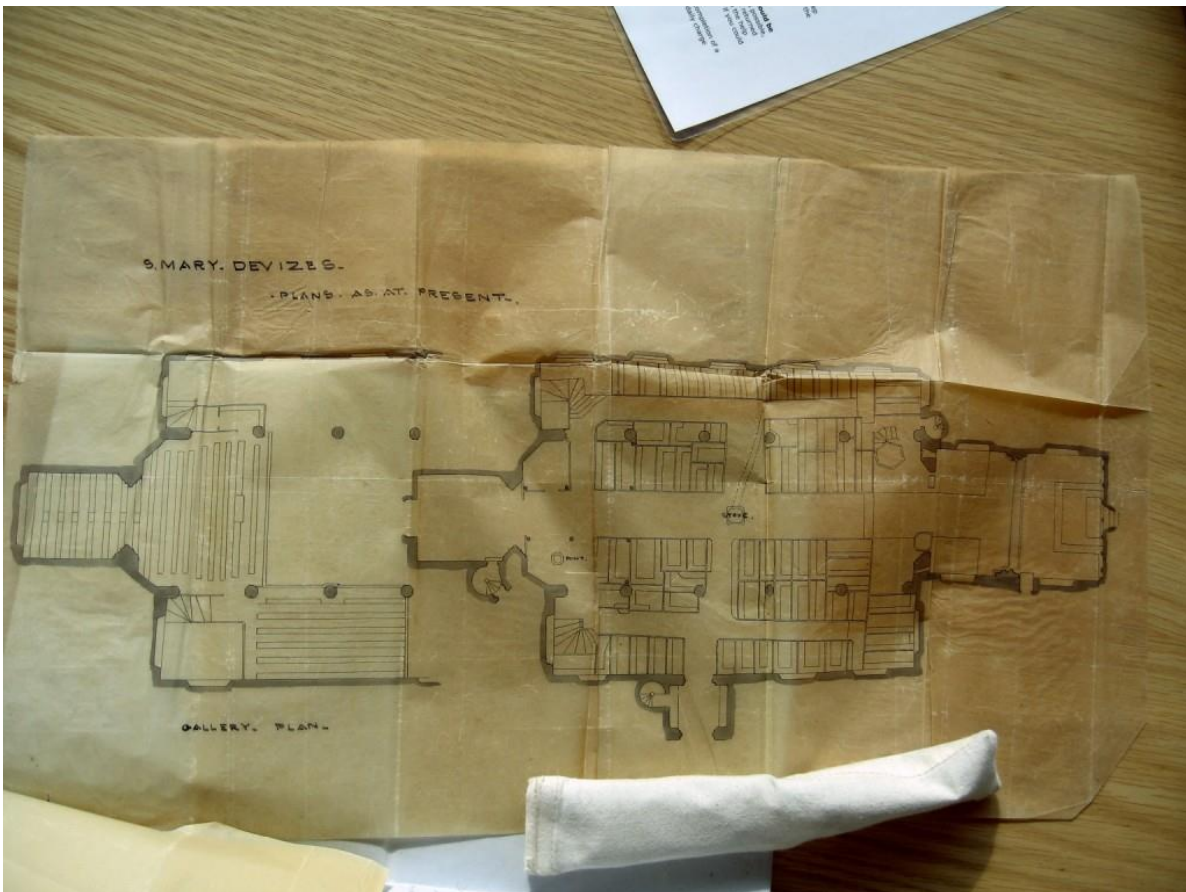


The original view is no longer possible due to the new trees. Also note that there seem to be no new grave markers in the view.



Plan of St. Mary's pre 1854 restoration.

	Date: 18/07/2009	Illustrator: MSM
	Source: WSRO D1/61/8/15	



Note the original position of the stove and dotted line marking the ?flue?. Also the location of the gallery in the tower and against the south aisle, seating some 150. The font and pulpit were also moved at the time.

The documents in the 1854 re-ordering state that there is “general decay” within the church and they wish to “take down the present galleries pews and seats, remove flooring and paving, clear out the earth within the church for ventilation.”

Tony Scorer and Stephen Brazier. October 2010