

# THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION TRUST

The Churches Conservation Trust is the national charity that cares for and preserves English churches of historic, architectural or archaeological importance that are no longer needed for regular worship. It promotes public enjoyment of them and their use as an educational and community resource. In 2009 the Trust celebrates 40 years of saving historic churches at risk.

There are over 340 Trust churches scattered widely through the length and breadth of England, in town and country, ranging from ancient, rustic buildings to others of great richness and splendour; each tells a unique story of people and place. All are worth visiting.

Many churches are open all year round, others have keyholders nearby; entry is free to all. A notice explaining opening arrangements or keyholders will normally be found at the church. Such information can also be obtained from the Trust during office hours.

We strongly recommend checking our website [www.visitchurches.org.uk](http://www.visitchurches.org.uk) for the most up to date opening and access details and directions.

Visitors are most welcome and we hope this guidebook will encourage you to explore these wonderful buildings.

*Historic churches, due to their age and previous use, often have uneven and worn floors. Please take care, especially in wet weather when floors and steps can also be slippery.*

## MAKING A DONATION

Your donation, no matter how small, will enable The Churches Conservation Trust to save more historic churches across England. If you would like to make a contribution, please use a Gift Aid envelope located at the church you visit, see our website [www.visitchurches.org.uk](http://www.visitchurches.org.uk), or contact our fundraising team on 020 7213 0673.

## NEARBY IS THE TRUST CHURCH OF

St Mary Old Church, Wilton  
3 miles W of Salisbury on A30  
in centre of Wilton

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THE CHURCHES  
CONSERVATION TRUST

# CHURCH OF ST MARY & ST LAWRENCE

Stratford Tony,  
Wiltshire



THE CHURCHES  
CONSERVATION TRUST

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[www.visitchurches.org.uk](http://www.visitchurches.org.uk) Registered Charity No. 258612 Spring 2009

£1.00

Front cover: The chancel looking east (Christopher Dalton)  
Back cover: Chancel east window



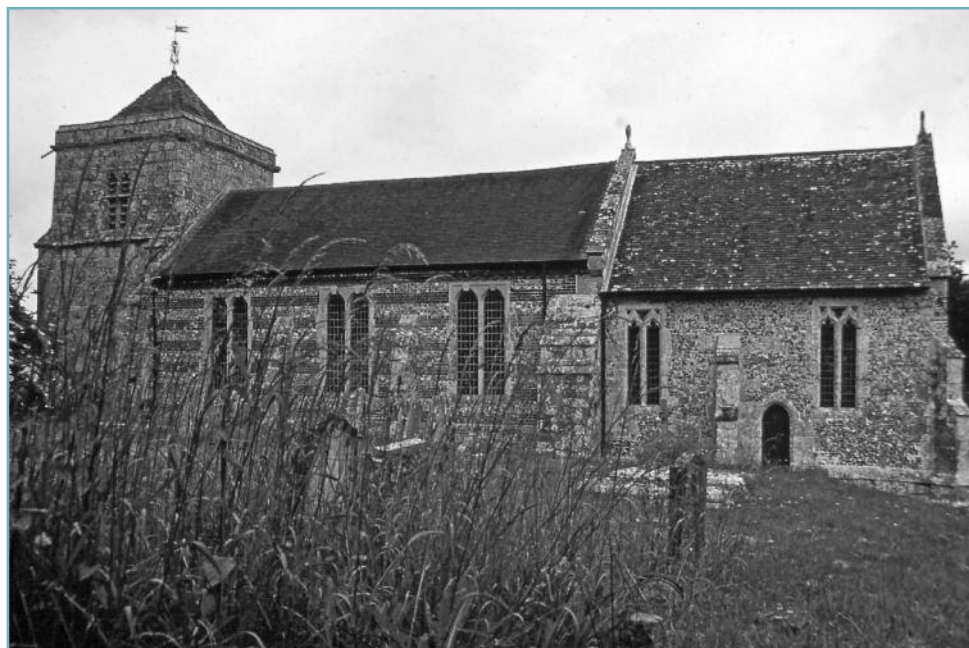
*Stratford Tony, Wiltshire*

# CHURCH OF ST MARY AND ST LAWRENCE

*by Anthony Barnes (Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and Director of the Redundant Churches Fund, now The Churches Conservation Trust, 1984–1992)*

Although a small village, with a population of about a hundred until the 19th century, Stratford Tony must have a very long history. It was here that the Roman road (*Strat* = street) from Salisbury to Blandford crossed the Ebble by a ford. The first half of the village's name recalls this. The Tony derives from Ralph de Toni, William the Conqueror's standard bearer at the Battle of Hastings in 1066, to whom the manor of Stratford was given.

*Exterior from the south*



*Interior looking west (Christopher Dalton)*

It is likely that the present church stands on the foundations of its predecessor. The chancel is 14th century, of flint with stone dressings, with elegant windows and, in the south wall, a piscina of Purbeck marble which, like the 13th-century font, was probably part of the previous building.

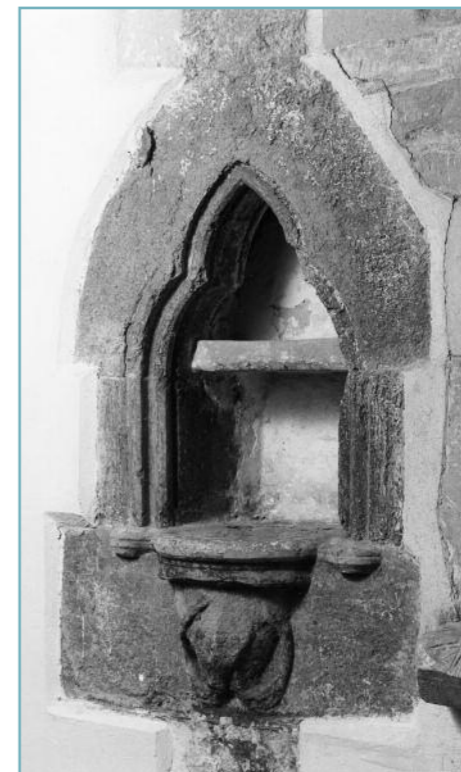
The tower arch and porch date from about 1500. The tower is typical Wiltshire work with square blocks of stone alternating with panels of flint. Gargoyles dispose of the rainwater from the roof.

There are now two bells, by John Lott of Warminster (1672) and Clement Tosier of Salisbury (1696). A third, by John Wallis of Salisbury (1612) has been moved to Coombe Bissett to replace another Wallis bell which was cracked.

The nave, no doubt again on an old foundation, is clearly post-medieval. The south wall was rebuilt in the mid-18th century and the north wall rebuilt later in the same century. Flint, stone and brick have weathered well, whatever the date, and help to make the church more than worthy of its delightful setting.

The fittings inside are no disappointment. The early-17th-century pulpit has been reduced in height. Pews, chancel stalls and screen must all derive from a late-17th-century arrangement, perhaps that referred to in an Episcopal Citation of 21 May 1683.

The church was restored in 1881–82 and it is assumed that the reduction in height of the pews and the rearrangement with wood block floors and colonnading all happened at that time.



*The piscina (© Crown copyright. NMR.)*

The work has been done so well that one regrets not being able to give credit here to whoever undertook it. The effect enhances what the writer of an earlier guide to the church called its 'wonderful serenity'.

Except for the east window of 1884 by C E Kempe the glass is clear. Below the east window is the medieval stone altar with its five consecration crosses. This also may be a relic of the previous building, and was no doubt used by the incumbent who was deprived of his living in 1570 because of his discomfort with the ways of the Reformers.

St Mary's was vested in the Redundant Churches Fund (now The Churches Conservation Trust) on 26 March 1986. Though it was lovingly cared for, the cost of repairs to the roof and



*The pulpit (© Crown copyright. NMR.)*

stonework was too great for a tiny community, with two other churches within two miles (3.2km). These repairs were carried out by E J Worsdell and Sons of Netheravon under the supervision of Mrs Margaret Maxwell during 1986–88.