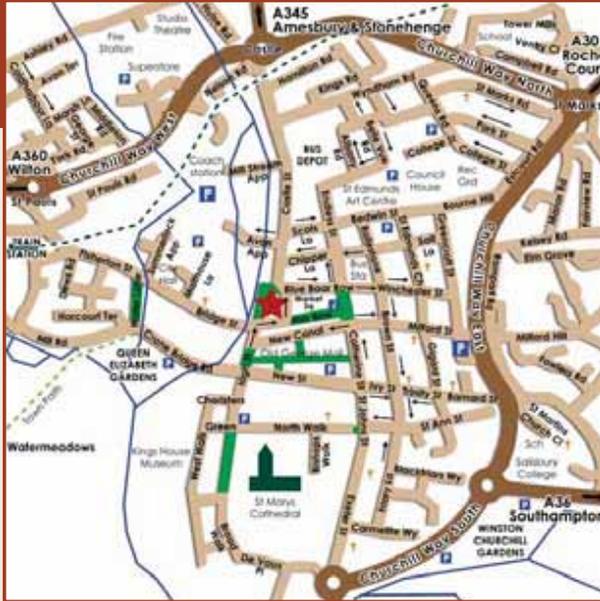


# The Building of St. Thomas's Church Salisbury

by Tim Tatton-Brown  
Architectural Historian & Freelance Archaeologist



## How to find St. Thomas's Church, Salisbury.

**Contact:**  
The Parish Office, St. Thomas's House,  
St. Thomas's Square, Salisbury, SP1 1BA  
**Tel:** 01722 322537  
**email:** saint.thomas@btinternet.com  
**website:** stthomassalisbury.co.uk

**Admission is free**, although donations are welcome towards the upkeep of this special building.  
There is full wheelchair access.

There is adequate parking and good Park and Ride facilities from all directions.

**Opening times** 8.30am – 6pm

**Tues & Sat** morning coffee is served in the People's Vestry 9.30am – noon.



# The Church of St Thomas of Canterbury, Salisbury

by Tim Tatton-Brown

The history of the fine late medieval church of St Thomas, in the centre of Salisbury, is examined afresh, and a new architectural history is suggested. Earlier theories of a 13th-century cruciform church are rejected, and it is suggested that the south tower was not first built as a free-standing bell-tower, but as the upper stage of a new south porch of c.1400 that was contemporary with the surviving walls of the nave aisles. Discussion of the rebuilding, and lengthening eastwards, of the chancel (after it collapsed in 1448) is followed by an examination of the reconstruction of the nave arcades, west window and roof.

Much has been written about this fine late medieval church, both about its documented history and about its architecture.<sup>1</sup> Despite this, and publication of the 'definitive' accounts by Victoria County History (VCH)<sup>2</sup> and the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England) (RCHME),<sup>3</sup> it can be suggested that the long-accepted architectural history of the church is in need of substantial revision.

For almost a century now, it has been considered that St Thomas's church was, in the 13th century, cruciform with 'a nave with choir formed at the east end, and north and south transepts' to quote Charles Haskins, who also observed that Doran Webb first had this idea, 'with the south porch to the south transept incorporated into the later tower'.<sup>4</sup> The RCHME developed this theory more fully, and suggested that the two very thin pilasters in the east wall marked the east end of the 13th-century chancel, and that the original 13th-century church was enlarged westwards after the 1448 collapse (see below).<sup>5</sup> They also suggested that the transepts were at the west ends of the present north and south chapels, and that part of an original doorway into the south transept still existed on the south side of the church. All these earlier theorists suggested that the bell-tower was originally a free-standing structure, which was only in the later 15th century incorporated into the south side of the south aisle.<sup>6</sup>

There is, however, no evidence for a cruciform church; rather, it seems that the outer walls of the north and south aisles, and the western parts of the north and south chapels, along with the bell-tower, were all built around 1400. After the chancel collapsed in 1448, the church was lengthened eastwards by about 19 feet, substantially rebuilt and entirely roofed. This was followed in the later 15th century by the rebuilding of the nave arcades, clerestory and west window, and the reroofing of the nave and aisles.

## THE 13TH-CENTURY CHURCH

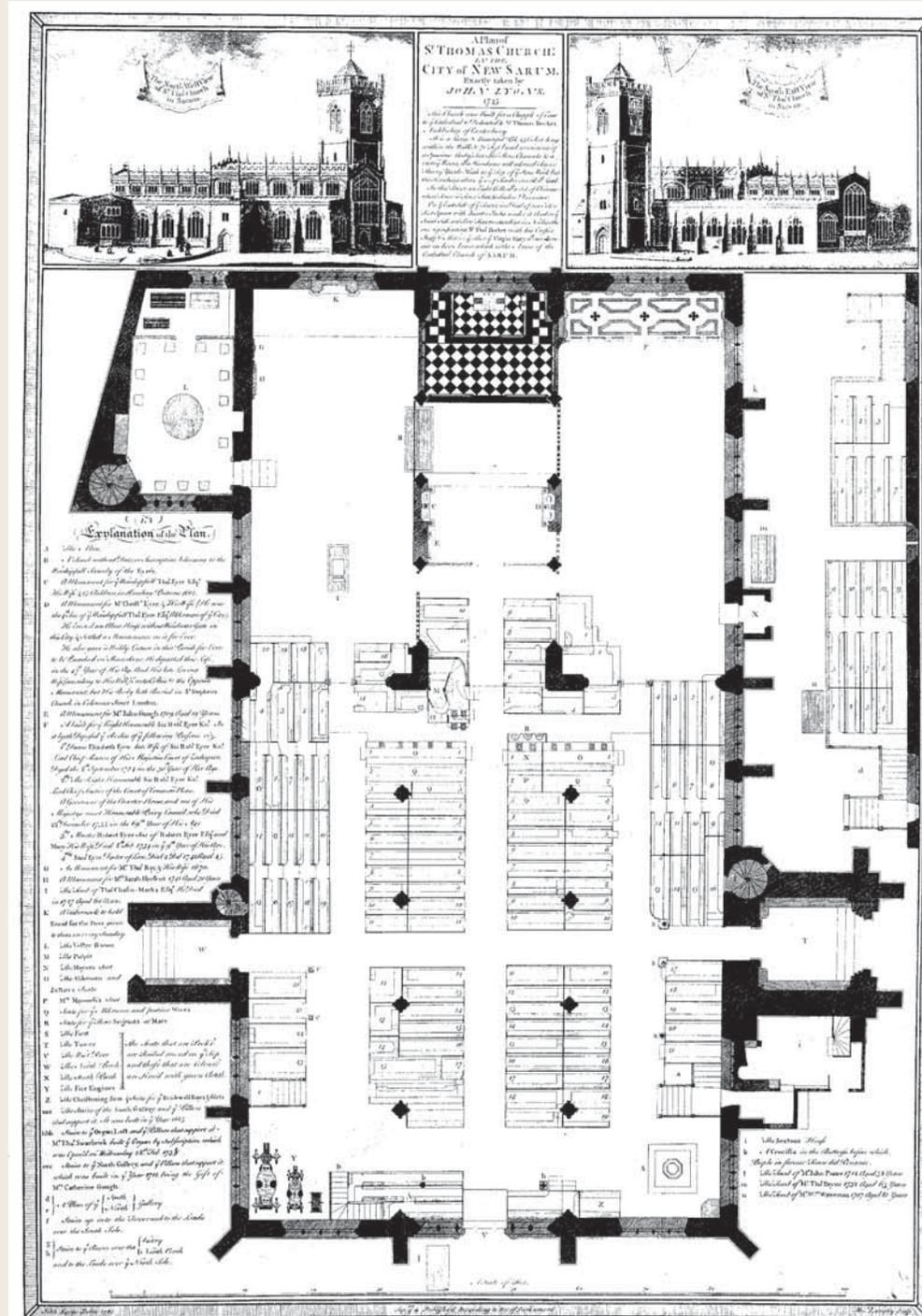
There is no mention of St Thomas's Church in Bishop Richard Poore's grant of 1228. It was, perhaps, among the churches and chapels 'to be constructed'.<sup>7</sup>

It is most unlikely to have been the temporary wooden chapel of St Thomas erected for Bishop Richard to celebrate mass on Trinity Sunday, 1219. This would have been in the cathedral which was itself to house a chapel of St Thomas. In 1238, however, Robert, Rector of the 'chapel' of St Thomas, is mentioned,<sup>8</sup> and in 1246 Robert of Beaver is Rector of the 'church' of St Thomas when an agreement was made between him and the cathedral treasurer about the allotment of funeral candles of people dying within the parish, but wishing to be buried in the cathedral cemetery.<sup>9</sup>

Despite earlier suggestions, there is no evidence for the 13th-century church in the present fabric. The thin pilaster buttresses of the east wall and the corbel tables on the outside of the chancel (but within the north and south chapels) must both date from just after 1448. As the RCHME points out, these corbel tables are completely unworn and have never been weathered. They must have been built to support the 15th-century chapel roofs. They are not reused from an earlier corbel table, and show no 13th-century characteristics. The 13th-century chancel was perhaps on the site of the western three bays of the present chancel, while the original nave, which may already have had narrow aisles, no doubt was beneath the present nave and aisles. Archaeological excavation may one day uncover the plan.

## THE EARLY PERPENDICULAR CHURCH

From at least 1269, when the Rector of St Thomas's was successor of the cathedral,<sup>10</sup> the Dean and Chapter were closely involved with the parish church. In 1363 they were permitted by the Pope to appropriate the income of the church for six years for the repair of the cathedral, whose walls and belfry were said to be 'cracked and falling',<sup>11</sup> and a new vicarage was to be endowed. The advowson at this time remained with the Bishop, but in 1399 Bishop Richard Metford was allowed to grant the advowson to the Dean and Chapter. At the same time the latter were permitted to appropriate the rectory income permanently to the fabric fund. A secular chaplain had to be provided by the Dean and



1. The first complete account is C. Haskins, 'The Church of St Thomas of Canterbury, Salisbury', WAM 26 (1910), pp.1-12.  
 2. Elizabeth Crittall, 'St Thomas's Church', VCH Wiltshire VI (London 1962), pp. 147-151.  
 3. RCHME, *Ancient and Historical Monuments in the City of Salisbury* Vol. 1, (London 1980), pp. 24-31.  
 4. Haskins, *op. cit.* (note 1) pp. 1-2.  
 5. RCHME, *op. cit.* (note 3), pp. 24-25. There is a summary on p. iii with a series of three plans showing the conjectural development.

6. Other brief accounts of the church are: A.R. Duffy, 'The Parish Churches of St Thomas, St Martin and St Edmund, Salisbury', *Archaeol. Journ.* 104 (1947), pp. 150-6; and N. Pevsner, revised B. Cherry, *Buildings of England: Wiltshire* (1963, rev. 1975), pp. 439-441.  
 7. *Sarum Charters and Documents* (Rolls Series, 1891), p. 191.  
 8. *Ibid.*, p. 246.  
 9. *Ibid.*, pp. 315-6.  
 10. *Sarum Charters and Documents* (Rolls Series, 1891), p. 348.  
 11. *Calendar of Papal Letters* (1362-1404), p. 89 and VCH Wiltshire VI, p. 147.

Chapter to serve the church, but no endowment was set up, and from this time there was only a curate, who was often also a member of the cathedral chapter. This arrangement was confirmed by the Pope in 1401.<sup>12</sup>

At exactly the same time there is documentary evidence for rebuilding work at the church. The will of Thomas de Boynton, which dates from 1400, gave 20 marks to the new fabric on the south side of St Thomas's, while in 1404 the Dean and Chapter granted 12 marks 'towards the work of the campanile of St Thomas's church, the amount to be advanced from the treasury of the cathedral till it should be repaid from the fruits and profits of the church.'<sup>13</sup>

This documentary evidence has been taken in the past to mean that only the bell-tower on the south was being built at this time, but an examination of the fabric of the lower north side of the tower shows clearly that it was built from the start as a tower and a porch that were joined to the south wall of the south aisle. The window jambs which directly adjoin the tower buttresses have blocks that are coursed in with the tower masonry, and the aisle walls cannot have been added later. There is also a continuous simple chamfered plinth; and there is no evidence for northern buttresses being cut off at a later date at the lower level as suggested in the plans by A.R. Duffy and the RCHME.<sup>14</sup> The ground floor of the tower, which is vaulted and has a large open arch on the south side, was also meant to be a porch. The inner doorway into the church has unfortunately been restored, but there can be no doubt that it was the main south doorway into the nave. On the north-east side of the tower is a spiral staircase leading to the upper floors of the tower. It was originally entered from the south aisle of the church, and above this now-blocked doorway to the stair turret there is a two-light square-headed window into the south aisle (now filled with lath and plaster). The external doorway to the stair-turret was made in the 19th century, with steps up to it. There was also a three-light window from the first floor chamber (now the ringing chamber) into the south aisle which is now blocked up. There is an intermediate chamber, and then a bell-chamber at the top of the tower which has two-light early Perpendicular windows in each of its four faces. The lower parts of these windows, which hold the belfry louvres, contain pierced quatrefoils. Inside the upper walls of the bell-chamber are heavy squinch-arches to support a stone spire. The lowest part of this spire still exists, but it is barely visible above the later crenellated parapets. At an early date the tower suffered from differential settlement problems, and it may have been because of this that the upper part of the spire became unsafe in the latter part of the 15th century and was

replaced by the present squat timber and lead-covered cap. Various repairs to cracks within the tower can be seen internally, and the tower itself has a pronounced lean to the south. The panelled and crenellated parapet, and the decorated string-course beneath it, must also date from the later 15th-century. Similar parapets can be seen on the late 15th-century top to the High Street gate into the close, and on the chamber block and tower-porch, added by Bishop Beauchamp to the bishop's palace.<sup>15</sup>

As already noted, there is clear evidence that the tower was built at the same time as the outer wall of the south aisle. This wall contains pairs of four-light early Perpendicular windows on either side of the tower, and it is strange that no one has pointed out that the tracery of the windows, and the simple, chamfered rere-arches all suggest a date in the late 14th or early 15th century rather than in the later 15th century. Thus it seems very likely that the nave aisle walls and the north and south porches were also being built in the years around 1400.<sup>16</sup> At about the same time, the north and south chantry chapels flanking the chancel were built, as well as the large pointed arches between the aisles and chapels which have simple chamfered mouldings. These arches have in the past been assigned various dates in the 13th or 14th century. The arch on the north is deformed considerably by differential settlement. The remains of the most westerly pier and the beginning of the first arch between the chancel and south chapel were uncovered in the last century. All the chapel windows have a similar fenestration, though the eastern chapel windows are of three lights, rather than four. An original c.1400 doorway into the south-west side of the south chapel was blocked up in the 19th century, and replaced by the present doorway two bays further east. Its eastern jamb is still visible externally, and the RCHME suggested that this doorway was at the south end of the south transept.<sup>17</sup>

By 1380 there were already 26 chaplains and 11 unbeneficed clergy attached to St Thomas's Church and, in the same year, there is the first mention of a chaplain celebrating daily for the souls of the King and of Robert Godmanstone and his family. A second chaplain was added the following year, and these men lived in lodgings 'next the churchyard'.<sup>18</sup> At this time, therefore, the Godmanstone chantry had already been established in a chapel on the north side of the chancel. Many other chantries were also being established by the richer citizens at this time, and by 1394 there were 14 chantry chaplains, as well as the parochial chaplains. Presentations of a chaplain to the chantry of St Bartholomew were made by the Dean and Chapter in 1404 and 1408, and in 1410 a chapel of St Stephen was mentioned in George Merriot's will.<sup>19</sup>

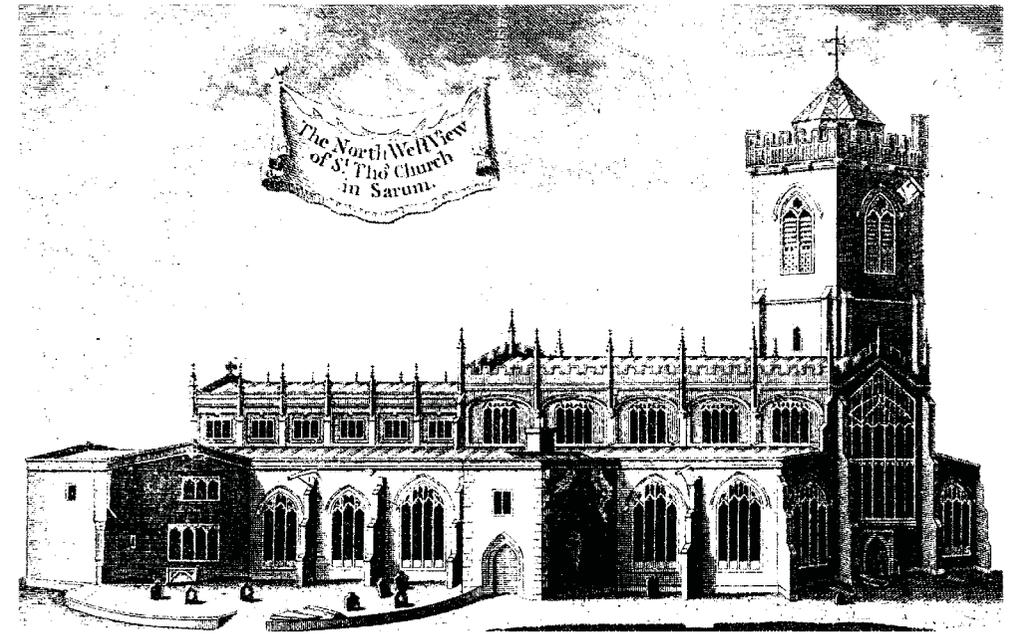
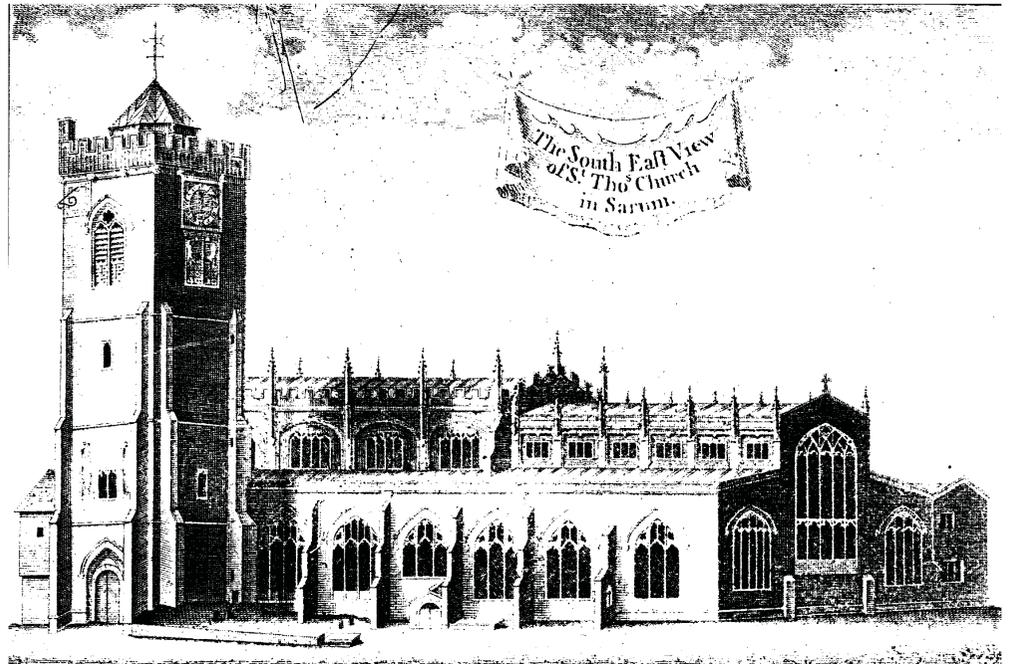


Figure 2. (Above) St Thomas's Church from the north-west;

and Figure 3. (below) St Thomas's Church from the south-east. Engravings by T. Langley after John Lyons, 1745



12. *Cal. Close Rolls 1396-99*, pp. 573-4 and 1399-1401, p. 392; and *VCH Wiltshire VI*, p. 147. Richard Metford (or Medford) was bishop between 1395 and his death was in May 1407.  
 13. Quoted by Hoskins, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp. 2-3.  
 14. Duffy, *op. cit.* (note 6), p. 151, and RCHME (note 3) p. 25.  
 15. RCHME, *Salisbury The Houses of the Close* (London 1993), pp. 45-6, 63-7.  
 16. The north porch was unfortunately demolished in 1835, and an identical four-light window was inserted in its place. Only the stair-turret to the chamber over the porch, and to the roof, survives. Its original form can, however, be seen in John Lyon's fine 1745 plan of the church, and in the accompanying

engraving of the church from the north-west, published at the front of H.J.F. Swayne (ed.), *Churchwardens' Accounts of St Edmunds and St Thomas, Sarum 1463-1702*, Wilts Record Soc. (Salisbury 1896).  
 17. RCHME, *op. cit.* (note 3), p. iii.  
 18. *VCH VI*, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 148; and *Cal. Pat. Rolls 1377-1381*, pp. 561 and 596. Their lodging house was perhaps the neighbouring 15, Minster Street, for which see WAM 76 (1982), pp. 99-104.  
 19. *VCH VI*, *loc. cit.* (note 18), and Hoskins, *op. cit.* (note 1), p. 2.

He left a set of scarlet ecclesiastical vestments to the altar of St Stephen in St Thomas's church, and also 'to the fabric of the chapel of St Stephen on the south side of St Thomas's church £10, provided it shall be faithfully begun, and fully constructed anew within 3 years of my death'. All this suggests that several chantries were being created in the late 14th and early 15th centuries. The new altars must have been in newly constructed north and south chapels, as well as at the east ends of the fine new side-aisles.

## THE MID 15TH-CENTURY REBUILDING

In 1447 or early 1448 the chancel and part of a side chapel collapsed. The subsequent agreement made between the Dean and Chapter and parishioners on 4 June 1448 was particularly revealing.<sup>20</sup> The Dean and Chapter as rector of the church agreed:

*to make the rofe of the said chancel after the lengthe and brede that was before in the length of the foresaid chancel fourty feete and four ynches. And in brede as those next the north. Wt. the pelers and arches according to the same length in the north side of the said chancel, wt. a cler story above the said aeles north wyndous acordingyng to the south side of the said chancel whiche the said parishioners maketh at their cost. And the said chancel rofe made at the coste of the said dean and chaptir shall be covered with lede sufficiente and in sech maner in brede that the south wall of the said chancel after the forsaid lengthe may be coverd and kept drie. The perpetual reparation of the which rofe afr the forsaid length and brede with the reparation of the north wall of the same church after the same lengthe above mention shall belong and perteyne to the said dean and chapter to their successors for ever. And the reparation of all the remanent of all this said werke olde and newe with all maner sheittyngg and clausure of the forsaid chancel wt. the making of the hve autre and alle that belangyth thereto shall lang and perteyne to the said paresheners and to thaire successors for ever.*

Now forty four feet is only three-quarters of the length of the present chancel, and it is clear that the Dean and Chapter were only prepared to pay for this, the original, length of chancel to be rebuilt and reroofed as well as the pillars and arches on the north side and the clerestory wall above. The rich parishioners, as the other party, agreed to pay for the lengthening eastwards of the church by nearly another 20 feet and to pay for the making of a new high altar and the new chapel roofs. They also agreed to pay for the upkeep of all this new work in the future, while

the Dean and Chapter would only look after the chancel roof and north arcade. Both parties agreed to make their work match each other's, and this is confirmed by the surviving building where the north and south arcades and clerestories are the same. The only difference is that whereas the foliated capitals on the north side contain no other devices, those on the south have various marks to show who contributed to their cost.

On the west southern capital is the inscription:

JHON NICHOL JOHN NICHOL JHON THE FOUNDER OF THE PELER WT A PART OF THE ARCHE AND JHNE THE WIF OF THE SEYDE JOHN

The neighbouring capitals to the east have the initials and merchants' marks of William Lightfoot and John Wyot on them.<sup>21</sup> Wyot was the mayor in 1447, while Lightfoot was mayor in 1451. William Lightfoot was also one of the twelve people who are named as parishioners in the agreement with the Dean and Chapter. The others are: William Swayne, John a Port the elder, Robert Cove, William Knollis, John Halle, Stephen Hendry, Thomas Tempe, Walter Coryon, John Perchaunt, John Wynchester and Richard Haynes. Most of them were well-known citizens. Henry was the leader of the tailors' guild, Perchaunt a goldsmith, and Winchester a leading barber-surgeon. John a Port was another wealthy merchant, who was mayor six times between 1446 and 1469, while William Swayne (mayor in 1444, 1454 and 1477) and John Halle (mayor 1450, 1456, 1464 and 1465) were two of the wealthiest merchants, soon to become bitter rivals and locked in an epic struggle (see below).<sup>22</sup> All these men must have put up money to extend the church eastwards. The break between the two phases of work can be seen on the south side of the south chapel, where the easternmost bay (i.e. just beyond the last buttress) has a more elaborate moulded plinth, which also extends along the east wall. When the masonry was complete, elaborate new roofs, with carved angels on them, were put over the chancel and the two enlarged chapels. The chancel roof is supported on fine carved stone corbels of angels holding musical instruments.

The north chapel, which still contained the chantry for the Godmanstone and Hungerford families and was called the Trinity Chapel, had a new roof on it paid for by William Ludlow of Hill Deverill, a wealthy royal servant and Butler to Kings Henry IV, V, VI.<sup>23</sup> His tomb, north of the high altar under the arcade between the chancel and north chapel, was destroyed in 1813.<sup>24</sup> The roof also has carved angels on it holding various coats of arms (Hungerford, Bouchier, Willoughby and Audley).

This suggests that other wealthy people also paid for the work.

The southern chapel was extended 19 feet eastwards, and externally this is marked by a more elaborate moulded plinth in the easternmost bay, though the window above is similar to the earlier ones. The whole chapel and the fine roof were paid for by William Swayne; this is recorded on the ceiling in painted inscriptions on both sides of all the main tie-beams asking for prayers for the souls of William Swayne, Crystian his wife, and James his father. The line of angels down the centre of the roof holds only the Swayne arms and merchant's mark, unlike the rest of the church's ceilings which contain a large number of coats of arms. There are also symbols of the Trinity, five wounds, and a pelican in her piety. It is known that the chapel contained two altars, to the Virgin and St John-the-Baptist. The latter altar was used for the Taylors' guild, and Swayne became the Taylors' patron during his mayoral year in 1444-45. After the collapse of the chancel in 1447, the Taylors obtained a licence to move the chantry to St Edmund's Church (the other large parish church on the north-east side of the city of Salisbury), but in 1448 they changed their minds, no doubt after Swayne had agreed to provide them with a new altar of St John-the-Baptist in his own chantry chapel. A new charter was then granted to them in 1449.<sup>25</sup> Oddly enough, Swayne's own licence to found a chantry at the chapel's neighbouring altar of Our Lady in the chapel for himself and his family, was not granted until 1468, and he did not apparently appoint the first chaplain there until 1472.<sup>26</sup> The decoration on the walls also does not seem to have been painted until the 1470s, as it contains the symbol of the Order of the Garter.

Richard Beauchamp, who helped Swayne to found his chantry, and build a house for the chantry priests (see below), did not become Bishop of Salisbury until October 1450, and 'master and surveyor' of the new royal chapel of St George's, Windsor until 1473.<sup>27</sup>

It is also worth noting here that the two chapels on either side of the chancel of St Thomas's exactly mirror the two chantry chapels built on either side of the Trinity Chapel at Salisbury Cathedral at the same period. This was after the new shrine of the newly canonized St Osmund had been located there in 1457. On the north was the Hungerford chantry (built 1464-71), while on the south was Bishop Beauchamp's own magnificent chantry, where he was buried in 1481. It was apparently not founded until shortly before the bishop's death. Sadly both chapels at the cathedral were destroyed by James Wyatt in 1789.<sup>28</sup>

## THE NEW VESTRY AND CHANTRY HOUSE

On the north-east side of the church is a fine two-storied vestry building which was being built in 1465 as a house for William Swayne's chantry priests. In the great dispute which arose between Bishop Beauchamp and William Swayne on the one side, and John Halle and the citizens of Salisbury on the other, there is a record of Swayne who:

*... by licence of the said now bishop upon certain ground of the said bishop did build under such service as they were accorded, for the worship and avail of his church, making the walls and chimnies of stone, upon the said ground, and when they were of a good height, certain evil disposed persons of the town, by purveying and maintenance of one John Hall, called Mayor, and Thomas Felde, citizen of the same, and others, by night time, riotously pulled down the said work and building to the great hurt of the said bishop, as well as of the evil riotous example.<sup>29</sup>*

This clearly refers to the new vestry building which was cut into the churchyard, with the bishop's permission, on the north-east side of the church. The irregular shape of the building is due to the already existing path around the outside of the churchyard, which is immediately to the north and east. It has a vaulted undercroft, which was used as a charnel house (now the boiler house),<sup>30</sup> with a two-storeyed building above. The main building could only be entered through a doorway from the north chapel, and its upper storey was reached by a spiral-stair in the north-west corner. The external doorway here was only made in the 19th century. Both storeys had fireplaces in the south wall and their main windows were on the east and west. The building still has its original shallow-pitched roof, and there is a large moulded plinth around the outside walls, which is the same as that around the east end of the church. Above the plinth there is a slight break in the rubble masonry between the east wall of the north chapel and the east wall of the vestry building, confirming that the vestry was probably built about sixteen years after the north chapel, and possibly showing a rebuild after it was pulled down in 1465. The reason for this gap in time is unknown, but it may be because John Halle and his group opposed the building of the vestry, which was immediately south-east of the medieval council-house throughout the period.<sup>31</sup> To build the new vestry, however, one bay on the north side of the old chapel would have had to have been removed and replaced by the new doorway into the vestry and the fireplaces and chimney flues.

20. Found on the 2nd folio of the Burgh Register (1447-1457) in the chapter archives. Unfortunately the middle part of the page has water staining on it, making certain passages very difficult to read. I am grateful to the archivist, Suzanne Eward, for allowing me access to the Register.

21. RCHME, op. cit. (note 3), p. 26.  
22. For details of the careers of all these men, see R. Benson and H. Hatcher, *Old and New Sarum or Salisbury* (London 1843) and VCH VI, op. cit. (note 2). See also B.F. Collier, 'John Halle, Merchant and Mayor of Salisbury', *Journ. Brit. Arch. Assocn.* 14 (1908), pp. 221-242.

23. *Tropenell Cart*, ed. J. Davies (Devizes 1908), i. p. 274 and VCH VI, op. cit. (note 2), p. 150.

24. Haskins, op. cit. (note 1), p. 11.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 4.  
26. The licence is transcribed in full in an appendix to Duffy, op. cit. (note 6), pp. 152-4.

27. Though he was on occasions chaplain of the Order of the Garter from 1452. He was made chancellor of the order in 1475 and also Dean of Windsor in 1478. See S.L. Ollard, *Fasfi, Wyndesorienses* (Windsor 1950), p. 34.

28. H.de S. Shortt, *The Hungerford and Beauchamp Chantries* (Salisbury 1970). See *Cal. Pat. Rolls. 1476-1485*, p. 276 for Bishop Beauchamp's chantry.

29. Benson and Hatcher, op. cit. (note 22), pp. 165-6, quoting Bishop Beauchamp's Black Book.

30. The 'Skull House' was emptied in 1687. It was entered from a doorway on the west. See RCHME (note 3), p. 28 for a full description of the vestry building.

31. See RCHME (note 3), p. 1, inventory number 38. The Council House was here from 1416 to 1584.

32. Pevsner, op. cit. (note 6), p. 441. Nineteen of the original twenty large angels still survive.

It is, therefore, possible that the vestry building was planned at an early stage of the rebuilding (i.e. 1449-50), as the eastern part of the north wall of the north chapel shows no sign of ever having had windows. There is one very small rectangular window in the upper wall of the chapel (now blocked) which looks from the upper vestry chamber into the north-east chapel.

Immediately west of the vestry, the earlier north wall of the north chapel still survives. It has the same three-light early Perpendicular windows as elsewhere, and its plain chamfered plinth contrasts with the moulded plinth around the vestry. Presumably the vestry building was finally finished (along with William Swayne's south chapel) in the mid 1470s, when the dispute with John Halle was finally settled. Bishop Beauchamp was very much in the ascendant after Edward IV had finally defeated Henry VI in 1471. It was at this time, for example, that the bishop was put in charge of the building of the new St George's Chapel at Windsor, where Edward IV started immediately to construct his own chantry chapel and place of burial. It is also worth noting that John Halle was never again to be mayor, while William Swayne was once again mayor in 1477 after a gap of 23 years.

## REBUILDING THE NAVE

Rather strangely the final stage of the rebuilding work seems to be undocumented. There can be little doubt, however, that it took place in the late 15th century, soon after the eastern arm had been rebuilt. The earlier arcades between the nave and aisles were entirely demolished, as was all of the upper west wall of the nave proper. In their place a new five bay arcade was put in which was similar in its detailing to, but much larger than, the chancel arcade. Much more interesting, however, is that the upper walls of the nave were thinned right down above the arches, and given splendidly decorated panelled upper walls with blind arcading and a whole series of large clerestory windows. This use of thin-walling is very characteristic of the late Gothic period, and the effect can also be seen on the outside, above the aisle roofs. The tops of the nave walls are crowned externally by a crenellated parapet. There are no crenellations on the lower chancel parapet, but the upper walls around the square-headed three-light clerestory windows of the chancel have been thinned down externally at the window sill level. The profile was spoiled in the 19th-century restoration by the removal of all the finials from the nave and chancel parapets which capped the little pilasters between the bays. The finials can be seen in the vignettes on Lyon's 1745 plan.

The west wall of the nave was almost entirely filled with a splendid large new seven-light transomed window, which appears externally to be taller than it is inside. This is because false upper lights are covered internally by the roof. Below the great west window is a fine new doorway which contains its original pair of wooden doors. Over the nave is a magnificent contemporary Angel roof that has been described as of Somerset type.<sup>32</sup> The angels at the east end all carry the symbols of the passion. The carved wood still contains much of its original coloured decoration, and this has been exposed again in the eastern bay of the roof. The rest of the roof, painted brown, has yet to be cleaned. The aisle walls of c.1400 still survive (see above); they too are now covered by fine late 15th-century carved roofs, the ceilings of which also need cleaning. On them can be seen a large collection of small painted angels holding heraldic shields (32 on each roof), and these suggest a date in the 1470s or early 1480s.<sup>33</sup>

Perhaps the most famous painted decoration in the church is the great Last Judgement, or 'Doom', painting over the chancel arch. This was whitewashed over in 1593 and rediscovered in 1819. It was not uncovered until 1881 when it was restored.<sup>34</sup> Although it was cleaned in 1953, this great painting is now once again in need of conservation and removal of 19th-century overpainting. It was probably painted on the wall above the chancel arch in the late 15th century, soon after the rebuilding work was complete; at about the same time a new rood-screen and loft were no doubt inserted into the lower part of the chancel arch. The flat, plain faces below the arch of the chancel walls on either side, and the (now blocked) high-level doorway on the south into the rood-loft both suggest that all these features were planned together. A large Rood (crucifixion scene with the Virgin Mary and St John below on either side) doubtless filled the centre of the chancel arch above the screen for the last half century before the Reformation.

All this rebuilding work between the late 14th and late 15th centuries demonstrates how wealthy Salisbury had become at the end of the Middle Ages.<sup>35</sup> As with so many other great churches of the period, it was the wealthy laymen of the town, and not the Church, who paid for all this work. In Salisbury, in particular, this can be contrasted with the magnificent new cathedral built on a colossal scale, a *fundamentis*, in the century or so before the Black Death. The building of a fine new parish church in the 15th century by its richest merchants, strongly reflects a new stage in the gradual process of emancipation from the control of the bishop that was not completed until after the Reformation.<sup>36</sup>

33. One shield, for example, has the arms of Bourgchier impaling those of the see of Canterbury. Thomas Bourgchier was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1454 to 1486. Benson and Hatcher, *op. cit.* (note 22), p. 288 suggest, however, that the arms were all repainted in the late 18th century, and are not accurate. This seems unlikely as the arms are mostly those of the later 15th century. Only careful cleaning and conservation will answer this for certain.

34. For a detailed account of this painting, see A. Hollaender, 'Doom painting of St Thomas of Canterbury', *WAM* 50 (1944), pp. 351-70.

35. By c.1500 Salisbury was probably the seventh largest and richest town in England. P. Clarke and P. Slack, *English Towns in Transition 1500 - 1700* (Oxford 1976), p.9.

36. When the church, ironically, had to change its dedication from St Thomas of Canterbury to St Thomas the Apostle. For a full discussion of all the stages of municipal development, see F. Street, 'The Relations of the Bishops and Citizens of Salisbury (New Sarum) between 1225 and 1612', *WAM* 39 (1915), pp. 185-257 and 319-367.