

All Saints' Church and High East Street



There has been a church here since medieval times. The medieval church was damaged by the great fire of 1613 and was rebuilt.

In 1685, when the County Gaol was full, the second church was used as a prison for two or more years, housing some of the Duke of Monmouth's rebels awaiting trial in Judge Jeffreys' 'Bloody Assizes'. The building was much damaged and had to be fumigated when fever broke out.

The second church had been demolished by the 1840s. Thomas Hardy wrote in 1910 that "Old All Saints' was, I believe, demolished because its buttresses projected too far into the street. What a reason for destroying a record of 500 years in stone!"

The architect of the present church was Benjamin Ferrey, who also designed Dorchester's Town Hall and the old County Hospital, as well as planning Bournemouth town centre. It is Victorian Gothic in style and was built at a cost of £3,000.

The first curate of the new church was the Reverend Osmond Fisher, a pioneering geologist and a friend of the painter, John Constable.

All Saints' has not been used as a church since 1970. It now houses the Dorset County Museum's archaeological research collections.

Somewhere on the church there are two stone carvings which say: Praise the Lord All Ye His Saints Can you find them?

The Dorchester Dormouse trail

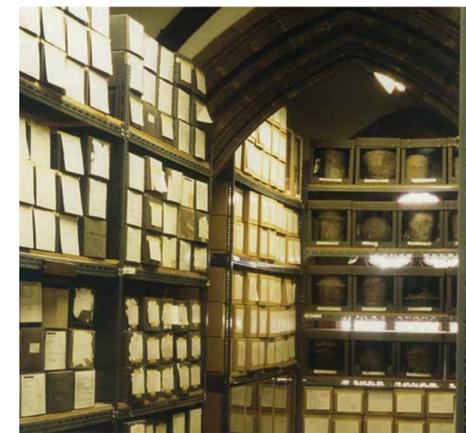


Find out more...

Look out for All Saints' church open days run by the Museum from time to time.



The Chubb monument, 1625. Matthew Chubb was town steward and MP for Dorchester. He was a merchant and moneylender (probably a 'loan shark' by today's standards) but he and his wife, Margaret, founded three almshouses for the poor in Dorchester, Shaftesbury and Crewkerne. You can see Chubb's Almshouse in North Square. He died in 1617 and his monument was moved from the old church to this one.



The Dorset County Museum store. The museum has collected archaeological material from across the county since 1846. Not all the material is suitable for display, but it is available to anyone who wishes to research the archaeology of Dorset.

High East Street in about 1890. Carriers' carts are making deliveries to shops. On the right is the Temperance Hotel, where alcohol was forbidden.

The Phoenix Inn was one of the pubs used by soldiers garrisoned in Dorchester. It appears in Thomas Hardy's poem 'The Dance at the Phoenix':

'Twas Christmas, and the Phoenix Inn
Was lit with tapers tall,
For thirty of the trooper men
Had vowed to give a ball
As 'Theirs' had done ('twas handed down)
When lying in the selfsame town
Ere Buonaparté's fall.

...

Save for the dancers', not a sound
Disturbed the icy air;
No watchman on his midnight round
Or traveller was there;
But over All Saints', high and bright,
Pulsed to the music Sirius white,
The Wain by Bullstake Square.



One of the memorials in the Church.



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