

Here are some of the stone and wooden features of the Parish Church of St John Baptist, Danbury. Every effort has been made to ensure the information is accurate, and I apologise for any errors or omissions. I would like to express my gratitude to my husband, Dr Neil Sinclair, who has taken all the photographs.

Mrs Elisabeth Sinclair 2012.

Terms in architecture

gadrooned *decorative motif consisting of convex curves in a series*

predella *altar base*

chamfered *The cutting away of the sharp edge which is formed where two blocks of wood or stone meet at right angles*

mouchettes *Tracery in the shape of a curved spearhead*

brattishing *carved openwork*

vulning *wounding*

a saltire *diagonal cross*

a mullet *straight sided star*

langued *tongued*

helm of an esquire

estoile *wavy sided star*

nowy headed *(Having a convex projection in the middle)*

spandrel *(gap between arch and rectangle)*

poppyhead *(form of carving of the end of a bench. Its name is unrelated to the poppy flower. It is derived from the Latin puppis, which means the poop or figurehead of a ship. In its simplest, and its most usual form, it has the appearance of a stylised fleur de lys)*

Summary of names of artists, craftsmen and manufacturers

Architects: EP Archer, Andrew Carden, Bernard Chalk, Wykeham Chancellor,

King, Lawrence and Partners, Sir Gilbert Scott

Builders: Bakers of Danbury Ltd Sanders of Maldon

Church Furnishers: Cox and sons Vanpoules Ltd

Craftsmen: Mr Agar Capt Alwyn Carr

Metalworkers: Humert Tailleur

Woodcarvers: S Marshall J W Walker and sons

Pulpit modeller: John Matthews

Sculptor: William Bloye

Stone masons: Albert Rushbrook Wray and Fuller

ARCADES NORTH AND SOUTH AISLES

An arcade is a series of arches carried on piers or columns, as in the nave arcades in churches. They may be open or closed and used to strengthen a wall or simply decorate it. Arcades may also support clerestory (with windows) walls which form the roof of an adjacent aisle.

The stone arcades are of three bays each, with two centred double chamfered arches of two orders. The North is formed of two columns and two responds, which are quatrefoil in section with moulded capitals and bases. *(The capital is a large carved headstone of a column or pilaster which supports arches or vaulting ribs. It is often richly carved with foliated, human or animal designs. The base is the lowest section of a pier or column, between the shaft and the ground. It comprises the plinth and associated moulding. A respond is a half pillar which is built against the wall at the end of an arcade.)*

The South is similar but continues into the chancel after a small width of wall with three more arches. The final arch forms part of the sedilia.

The arcades are 14th Century, restored in 1847.

Old photographs of the church from Danbury Records





SEDILIA SANCTUARY SOUTH WALL

Sedilia (*the plural of Latin sedile, seat*) are stone seats, usually found on the south side of an altar, for the use of the officiating priests. The seat is often set back into the main wall of the church itself. The custom of recessing them in the thickness of the wall began about the end of the 12th century. Some early examples consist only of stone benches.

There are damaged sedilia of two steps forming a narrow higher East seat and a larger broader lower West seat. The seats are stone slabs with squared edges, tapering into the supporting wall below. All that remains of the frame is 102cm of the East reveal, plain except for part of a damaged decoration, possibly the stop of an arch, and blocks 28cm high backing the higher seat. A cut 5cm x 3cm has been made in the leading edge of the higher seat. They were partly destroyed by enemy action when a bomb fell in the churchyard 20/05/1941, seriously damaging the South East of the church. They were restored 3rd quarter of 20th Century

1. Overall height 111cm width 162cm Higher seat width 67cm depth 35cm Lower seat width 93cm depth 66cm.



REREDOS ORIGINALLY ON EAST WALL BEHIND ALTAR
SECTION NOW SET IN SOUTH WALL OVER SOUTH DOOR

The central section of the original 19th Century alabaster reredos of the High Altar is now mounted as a wall panel supported on a moulded shelf with three square foliated motifs. It is thought to be Italian. The original stone reredos was presented in 1892 in memory of Bishop Legh Cloughton, 77th Bishop of Rochester and 1st Bishop of St Albans, by his children. The reredos was damaged when the East wall was destroyed when a bomb fell on the churchyard 20/05/1941. The surviving section was set in the South wall during the restoration work. A new hand was carved for the Angel Gabriel by Albert Rushbrook, mason, of Baker and Sons, Danbury.

On the panel the Annunciation is depicted in high relief. The Virgin Mary kneels at a sloping topped prie-dieu decorated with two carved panels, each showing a vase of flowers with a small scroll, the West one inscribed ALLELUIA. She is nimbed (*has halo*) and wears a loose cloak falling away from her head and a long sleeved robe. Her left hand clasps the neck of her cloak and her right rests on an open book. She kneels on a tasselled cushion and has her head and shoulders half turned to her left. To the East the angel Gabriel stands facing the Virgin with his right hand lifted in blessing and his left hand carrying a sceptre. He has wavy hair, a loose mantle over a long sleeved robe and bare feet. His right wing is visible from head to ankle level. In the background is a curtain hanging on rings and rail. Between Gabriel and the Virgin is a tall lily in a gadrooned (*decorated with convex curves*) pot. In the top centre a dove descends towards the Virgin. Traces of original colouring and gilt remain.

Panel: Height 126cm width 89cm depth 15cm.



Old picture showing original reredos in place.



Detail from picture above.



PISCINA SANCTUARY SOUTH WALL

A piscina is a shallow basin placed near the altar of a church or else in the vestry or sacristy and is used for washing the communion vessels. The sacrarium is the drain itself. Cleaning the vessels in this basin ensures that any remaining consecrated particles are returned directly to the earth. At first piscinae were just cups or small basins placed close to the wall. Then they were recessed into the wall. They were rare in England until the 13th century, after which there is scarcely an altar without one. A cinquefoil headed stone piscine under a hood mould with much worn mask stops and hollow chamfered jambs (*vertical supports*). The basin is circular with a drainage hole and is set in a protruding shaped sill. A wooden shelf, 35cm x 11cm has been fixed just below the head. It is late 13th Century H 82cm w 65.5cm d 30cm



PISCINA SOUTH AISLE SOUTH WALL

A cinquefoil headed stone piscine under a hood mould with hollow chamfered jambs. The deep circular bowl with a drainage hole and is set in a stone block with a shield shaped face that protrudes 6cm from the wall. It appears to be a copy of the one in the Sanctuary. This piscina is for the Lady Chapel. It was probably installed during the 1866 rebuilding. A wooden shelf, 34cm x 12cm has been fixed just below the head. H 86cm w 66 cm d 38cm



STOUP NORTH AISLE NORTH WALL

A stone stoup is set square edged into the wall to the west of the North door with a shallow basin under a segmented head with chamfered edge. This may have been a piscine once somewhere else in the church which has been reused as a stoup, as the basin has a drain hole, now blocked. Thought to be 15th Century. H 29cm w 24cm d 24cm



STOUP

TOWER NORTH WALL INSIDE GLASS DOORS

A holy water font or stoup is a vessel containing holy water generally placed near the entrance of a church. It is used in some Anglican churches to make the Sign of the Cross using the holy water upon entrance of the church. It was found in the wall of the church in post war rebuilding and dedicated June 1964. It is a simple Portland stone stoup of 12th Century, with a deeply dished tone, scored in the soffit, set in wall. The basin protrudes and has simple moulded ribs at each side. A brass plate on the wooden shelf below bears an explanatory inscription in 2 sizes of Roman caps and l/c and in italics l/c. 40cm w 33cm d 17cm

THIS ANCIENT STOUP FOUND DURING REBUILDING AFTER WAR DAMAGE WAS PLACED HERE IN 1963 FOR THE MINISTRY OF FRANK STUART HOPKIRK RECTOR 1636 – 1960



FONT WEST END OF NAVE

A font is a structure designed to hold the holy water which is used at the sacrament of baptism. A plain stone octagonal bowl with chamfered top edge supported on an octagonal stem with a moulded collet and stepped base. It stands on an octagonal plinth with an extension. 46cm x 50cm to the South. It has a circular lead basin with a brass plug. There is slight damage to the SSE corner of the bowl rim. It dates from 1857.

The oak cover is an octagonal crown shape rising to a foliate finial (*a usually leaf like decoration which forms the top of a gable or corner originated in 14th Century*). It is wooden and between the crocketed (*projecting carved flowers, leaves or bunches of foliage*) ribs each panel has a pierced mouchette (*14th Century tracery in shape of a curved spearhead*) above a pierced quatrefoil (*open tracery in form of a four lobed flower*) which is supported by two trefoil headed lights. The base has a brattished (*carved openwork*) foliar frieze above a deep moulded border, in the centre of which is inscribed in raised Victorian gothic lettering: SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN AND FORBID THEM NOT TO COME UNTO ME FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

Base h 122cm, font h 114cm diameter of bowl 74cm, cover h 106cm diameter 70cm



The cover hangs by a chain and hook (fitting into a ring in the finial) from a red painted wrought iron swinging arm which is attached to the South wall of the nave above the arcade. The chain passes through a counterweight and divides pass over twin pulleys at the end of the arm and

descends to the circular blue and red counterweight. This is decorated with ten yellow rosettes. Fixed to the arm are two painted shield shapes East shows Noah's Ark and West shows a dove.



Counterweight



NICHE NORTH AISLE EAST WALL

A niche was a vertical hollow, or ornamental recess, in a wall originally designed to hold a small statue. A small cinquefoil headed medieval stone niche with 6.5cm reveals at each side and 5cm at base. H 40cm w 16cm d 21 cm

SQUINT NORTH AISLE EAST WALL / CHANCEL NORTH WALL

The North aisle for a time was a private chapel, probably for the St Clere family who were supposed to have built the church and the wooden effigies are most likely members of their family. The squint was to allow those in the private chapel to see the altar.

A lancet shaped 14th Century stone squint passing through the East wall of the North aisle behind the East respond of the North arcade. The East end is D-shaped and has been filled with glass.

H 63cm w 24cm d 198cm

PISCINA NORTH AISLE EAST WALL

The North aisle is the oldest part of the church and was also used as a private chapel, probably by the St Clere family. There would have been an altar on the East wall which is why there is a piscina here. There is a square headed medieval stone piscina with partial reveal on North side. The stone containing the basin is very worn, leaving only a shallow depression. There is a trace of decoration on the leading edge. H 54cm w 53cm d 21cm



Niche top left, squint top right with piscine underneath

SQUINT SANCTUARY NORTH WALL / VESTRY

The vestry may originally have been an anchorite (m)/ anchoress (f) cell - a small dwelling in which a pious person (most were women) passed her days in prayer in solitary confinement. Such cells were usually built against the northern exterior of the church. The anchorite was able to see the high altar through a hole in the wall, and there was another on the outside to allow food to be passed in by the local people. The occupant would have received Communion through this opening. A 15th Century narrow squint with trefoil head and base and chamfered edges (now glazed on the Sanctuary side with three leads and a central iron bar). On the vestry side there is a deep arched tapered recess into which has been fitted a wooden sill. This has a small drawer with moulded edges in the apron. The top edge of the arch and the lower edge of the wooden apron are both chamfered. Two flat headed metal pins have been fixed on each side.

Sanctuary side h 50cm w 19cm Vestry side h 64cm w 49cm. d 60cm, apron d 16cm.



Squint from vestry



Squint from sanctuary

FIREPLACE? VESTRY WEST WALL

A rectangular stone framework with a slightly arched chamfered head. This surrounds a niche about 50 cm from the floor. It has been suggested that this was a fireplace but there is no trace of a chimney. Other possibilities are an oven or a cupboard or where food was left for the anchorite. H 55cm w58.5cm d 8.5cm.

Photo of how it looks now with radiator in front.



Digitally remastered photo, removing radiator, to give impression of what it looked like.



PULPIT

The oak pulpit is formed of six sides of an octagon, the remaining two sides of which are taken up by a flight of four wooden steps with shaped side panels and moulded tops. It is of framed construction with buttresses, and applied gothic trefoil blind tracery to the square headed panels, each with moulded sill and base. It stands on a single octagonal shaft, formed of 3 stepped moulded tiers below a straight sided octagonal stem, from which branch 8 brackets which support the floor of the pulpit. Radiating from the base of the shaft are 8 feet of rectangular section, with shaped ends. There is a small moulded adjustable bookrest fixed by two metal stays and having a small curved strip light. Inside the pulpit is a small angled shelf on a wooden bracket. The pulpit was probably carved by John Matthews, whose name is to be found scratched on the large double doors over the mechanism of the clock in the church belfry. High up near the ceiling it says JOHN MATTHEWS PULPIT MODELLER – TURNER OF STONE AND WOOD, MAY 13TH 1868 It was part of Sir Gilbert Scott's 1868 restoration. H 244cm diameter 130cm



MAIN ALTAR SANCTUARY

A plain panelled oak 20th Century altar, dated 1951, has a single front panel inset between two fluted pilasters, the centre of the panel is decorated with a large cross patée within a roundel. The sides of the altar are each of a single panel, the whole on a moulded base which stands on a stone predella (*altar base*). The front panel and the inner rim of the roundel are outlined in gold. The altar top has four incised consecration crosses, two at each end.

The inscription is on a small silver plaque fixed to the centre of the altar top.

There is a linen altar runner with whitework scrolls at each end over a plain one.

H 99cm w 153cm d 84cm It was carved by Andrew Cardin.

It was given by Lieutenant Commander Lambert in memory of his father.

IN MEMORY OF EDGAR LAMBERT 1895 – 1949, CANON EMERITUS OF LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL.

REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS.

REREDOS SANCTUARY

The oak reredos extends across the whole width of the East wall of the chancel below the East window and takes the form of a shaped pelmet with cavetto moulded cornice supported by two columns at the extreme sides, which project at an angle from the corners of the walls and which are decorated with a small horizontal bar every 52cm. Within the central recess, from below the pelmet to floor level hang full length curtains. H 290cm w 615cm

The architect was E P Archer and the work was carried out by Bakers of Danbury Ltd in 1951 to replace the alabaster one which was damaged by a bomb in 1941. Half the expense was paid by the War Damage Commission.

ALTAR RAILS SANCTUARY

The oak altar rails date from the 19th Century and are constructed in three bays. The flat moulded top rail is made in three sections, the centre section is divided in two for gates. The gates are slightly off centre with hinged sections with brass hinges which open towards the altar. Each full bay of the rails is square headed, divided into five panels of open tracery, each panel having a trefoil ogee head, with tracery above. On the South side there are two full bays of 5 panels and on the North side one full bay of 5 panels and one of 2 panels. The centre gates are 3 panels each. There are small buttresses supporting the gates, and one at each end of the rails.

H 42cm w 551cm d 10cm



BISHOP'S CHAIR SANCTUARY

An oak black stained armchair carved in high relief, of panel back construction. It is of Flemish origin and was originally in the Bishop's private chapel at Danbury Palace. It was given to the church by Mrs Claughton, wife of Bishop Claughton, on his death in 1852.

The panel framed in the back shows the head of Christ crowned with thorns with instruments of the Crucifixion – cross, spear, vinegar sop, flogging ropes, and a serpent surrounded by cinquefoil blind tracery and flanked on either side by cherub heads. The cresting is in the form of a triangular panel with a standing figure, possibly St Catherine, with a wheel at her feet, holding a sword and flanked by two small figures. Surmounting the whole is a carved finial and two more finials surmount the back uprights on either side. The arms terminate in lions couchant. The front uprights are octagonal in section with pierced brackets and octagonal feet. Pierced tracery joins the armrest and the panelled seat. The chair is 19th Century, but carving of St Catherine 16th or 17th Century. H 178cm w 64cm d 56cm.





COMPANION CHAIR SANCTUARY

An oak armchair, stained black, companion to Bishop's chair, carved in high relief, of panel back construction. It is of Flemish origin and was originally in the Bishop's private chapel at Danbury Palace. The panel framed in the back shows the head of a weeping woman, probably Mary Magdalen, in a circlet with symbols of the Passion – cross, skull, scourge, thorns, surrounded by cinquefoil blind tracery. The cresting is in the form of a triangular panel stretching between the two back posts, showing the seated figure of Christ holding the cross and on the right is the seated figure of God the Father holding in his right hand the orb of the world and in his left a sceptre. At the feet of each figure is a cherub's head and surmounting the figures the figure is a dove, head downwards, symbolising the Holy Ghost. The arms terminate in lions couchant. The front uprights are octagonal in section with pierced brackets and octagonal feet. Pierced tracery joins the armrest and the panelled seat. The inscription is on a brass panel 20cm x 7cm on panelled seat. The chair is 19th Century, but central carving is 16th or 17th Century. H 178cm w 64cm d 56cm.

It was donated by Brigadier and Mrs J T Wigan of Danbury Palace in 1922.

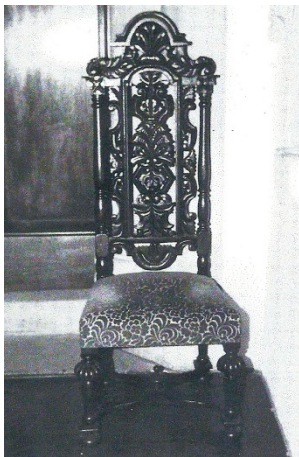
THIS CHAIR FORMED PART OF THE FURNITURE OF THE CHAPEL AT DANBURY PALACE, THE RESIDENCE OF A BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE FROM 1846 – 1892. WHEN THE CHAPEL WAS DISMANTLED IN DECEMBER 1922, THIS CHAIR WAS GIVEN TO DANBURY PARISH CHURCH BY BRIGADIER GENERAL AND MRS J T WIGAN.





CHAIRS IN SANCTUARY

There were a pair of 17th Century oak chairs in the Chancel which were stolen in the 1980s. They had upholstered seats and turned legs with gadrooned bulbous knees and bun feet. The curved cross stretchers have a moulded and turned finial at their intersection. The back was decorated with stylised pierced carving and the cresting, which had an ornate stylised carved leaf decoration, rode over the turned back uprights. One chair was numbered IV and the other VI in three places on the back. One had a raised green velour seat with matching kneeler. They had new covers donated as a thank offering for the births of Neil and Simon Rowlings. The seat of the other was embroidered in crewel wool on canvas with a gold background worked diagonally on each quarter in satin and cushion stitch to form a large cross in the centre in pale blue tent stitch. In the centre of the cross is the Essex shield which has a red background and 3 gold seaxes (*curved swords*), barwise their points sinister and their cutting edge upwards. Above and below the shield is a red rose and at each side a white rose emblems of Yorkshire and Lancashire. The initials JSM are embroidered immediately above the shield and 1917 – 1976 in gold below. It was designed and worked and donated by Mrs Olga Mills in memory of her husband Mr John S Mills in 1979. Mr Mills came from Lancashire and Mrs Mills from Yorkshire. It was upholstered by H G Lomas and Son Ltd.



They were replaced by two light oak chairs made by Mabbitt of Danbury .

ALTAR LADY CHAPEL

The oak altar was formerly in the Sanctuary and was moved to its present position when the Lady Chapel was constructed after the bombing of 1941. There is a note in Archdeaconry of Essex Visitations 1683 – 1686 'The communion table is to be made narrower.' This may refer to this altar which would have been the main altar in the chancel at that time. It was resited in the scheme for the Lady Chapel drawn up by Mr E P Archer FRIBA, who died before it was constructed. Bakers of Danbury Ltd carried out the work under the direction of Mr Andrew Cardin ARIBA.

The reconstruction was paid for in part by War Damage Commission and part by insurance monies. The altar has a rectangular panelled frame and a plain moulded table top incised with five consecration crosses. It is on a raised moulded dais 13cm high. It has heavy brocade altar frontal with all over multicoloured floral pattern on a cream background with beige fringe at floor level. It has a linen altar runner with blue cross stitch embroidery at each end. H 98cm w 192cm d 72cm

REREDOS LADY CHAPEL

1. The reredos panels were formerly along East wall of Sanctuary and were put together and beading was made by Mr Agar in 1943. The oak reredos is of heavily framed and moulded construction with eight square headed panels divided by roll moulding. It stands on a deep solid plinth with hollowed chamfered top edge. Each panel is decorated with blind trefoil tracery at the head and has foliage designs in the spandrels (*gaps between arch and rectangle*) and is cusped with rosettes. The two end panels on the South side are hinged and form a pair of doors. The reredos is backed by an oak screen which was erected in 1938 to separate what was then the South chapel from the South aisle. H 214cm w 408cm

ALTAR RAILS LADY CHAPEL

There are oak rails around the North and West sides of the altar. The simple moulded top rail rests on 5 pairs of moulded standards of rectangular section. A section of the top rail on the South side is removable. The corners are supported by a group of three standards. The inner moulded section of each standard is painted green on its outer side. The inscription is on a small centrally placed silver plaque. WILLIAM SPOKES 1865-1950 SEXTON FOR 30 YEARS Bakers of Danbury Ltd carried out the work in 1952 under the direction of Mr Andrew Cardin ARIBA. H 59cm d 10cm west side L 485cm north side L 258cm

CHAIRS LADY CHAPEL

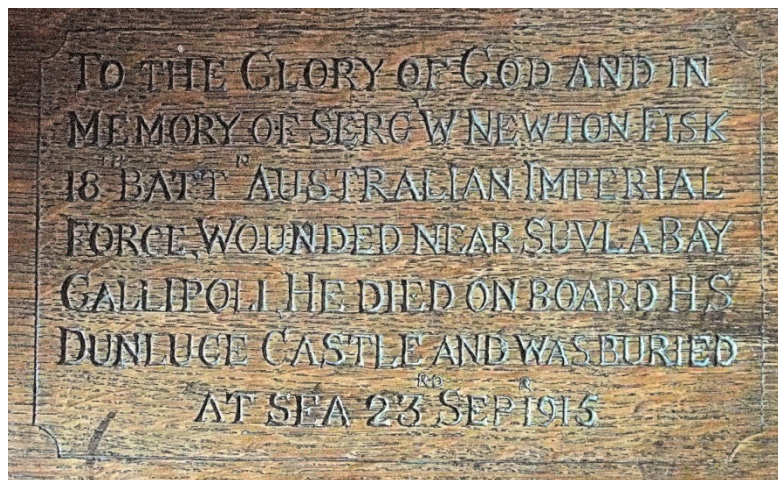
4 balloon backed mahogany chairs have unornamented backs and back rails with heavily padded and shaped seats, covered as two matching pairs. The front legs are turned and tapered terminating in straight peg feet. The back legs are sabre shaped. H 89cm w 47cm d 45cm



LITANY DESK LADY CHAPEL

The desk of Austrian wainscot oak is in the style of the benches within the church and consists of 2 fleur-de-lys poppyhead standards each with a small trefoil in blind tracery at the base. The standards support the sloping book rest beneath which is open tracery, formed of three trefoil ogee headed arches with further open tracery of 2 mouchettes in 2 full and 2 half roundels above. The whole stands on a chamfered plinth. There is a detached kneeler, upholstered in gold brocade, resting on the plinth. The inscription is incised on the wood of the bookrest. H 113cm w 63cm d 67cm It was carved by S Marshall of Coggeshall in 1916 at cost of £11 10s.

TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN MEMORY OF SERGEANT W NEWTON FISK 18TH BATTALION AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE, WOUNDED NEAR SULVA BAY, GALLIPOLI (*Turkey*) HE DIED ON BOARD HS DUNLUCE CASTLE AND WAS BURIED AT SEA 23RD SEPTEMBER 1915.



LECTERN NAVE TO RIGHT OF CHANCEL STEPS

This is an oak book desk in the form of an eagle with outstretched wings with head inclined to the left and standing on a half sphere. Below this is a moulded section and a band carved with thistle heads and leaves, supported on an octagonal stem with four tapering buttresses terminating in a series of small thistle heads in high relief. The whole springs from an octagonal moulded stepped base in three courses round the lowest of which the inscription is carved in Roman caps in high relief. It was given by relatives in memory of Maurice W Kirk in 1921. The family lived at Little Riffhams. H 167cm w 57cm d 57cm

TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN LOVING MEMORY OF MAURICE WROTTESELY KIRK, CAPTAIN IN KING'S OWN ROYAL LANCASTER REGIMENT WHO FELL AT SPION KOP (*Spioenkop, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*) JANUARY 24TH 1900 AGED 33



CHOIR STALLS CHANCEL

Two rows of oak choir stalls facing North and South are on either side of the chancel. These have fixed benches with carver poppy heads end standards which are chamfered. The rear stalls on either side are divided into seven seats by moulded upright shaped panels and shouldered arms and have shaped seats with cushions. A small brass plaque with inscription is attached to the back of the Westernmost seat on the North side to commemorate Armstrong Gibbs on this, his habitual seat in the choir. IN MEMORIAM C ARMSTRONG GIBBS COMPOSER 1889 – 1960

The front stalls are in the form of a single bench with feather panelled backs. Their reading desks have decorative panels of tracery open at the lower part with blind tracery in the head. The panels are of open trefoil tracery with blind tracery circles containing three mouchettes (*Tracery in the shape of a curved spearhead*). The front of the book rest forms the top rail of the front panels and is cut out of the solid. The short buttresses are moulded and chamfered with a panel of blind tracery above. A small traceried screen extends behind the full length of the choir stalls and has small returns at either end. The screen is panelled with pierced Gothic tracery and has a moulded head rail finished with brattishing (*carved openwork*). On the North side the back of the top rail is fixed to the wall, so there is only a single line of brattishing, but the returns have a double line. The screen is freestanding on the South side and has a double line along its full length and the returns. The South side screen is glazed for half its length as a draught shield. At the extreme West end of each rear stall there are plain wooden bookrests at standing height, purpose made to fix on top of existing choir stall book rests. They were part of Sir Gilbert Scott's 1868 restoration.

Back rows h 169cm w 50cm l 520cm, Front rows h 145cm w 41cm l 520cm,
front desks h 123cm w 36cm l 520, reading desks h 90cm w 69cm d 24cm

