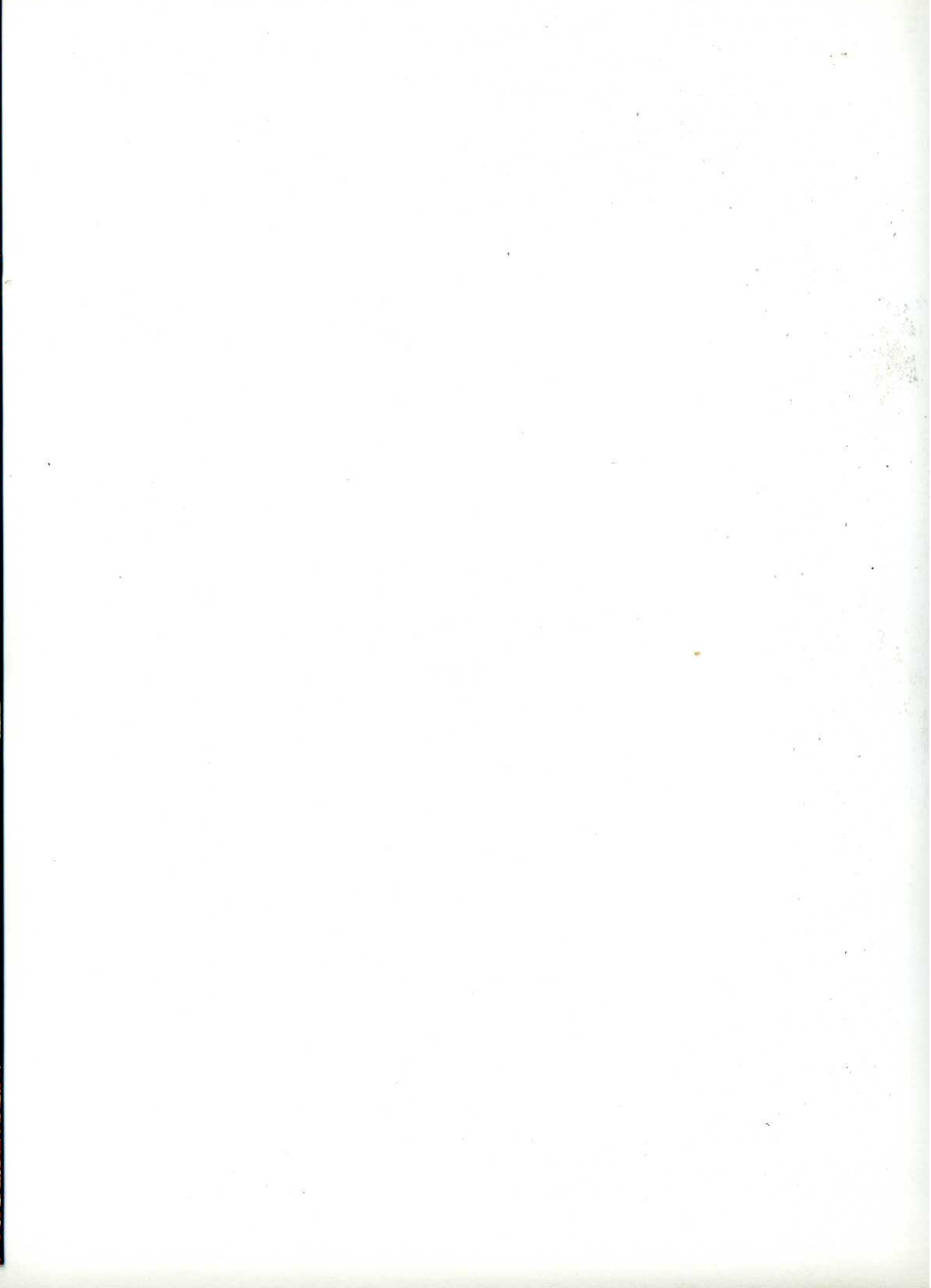
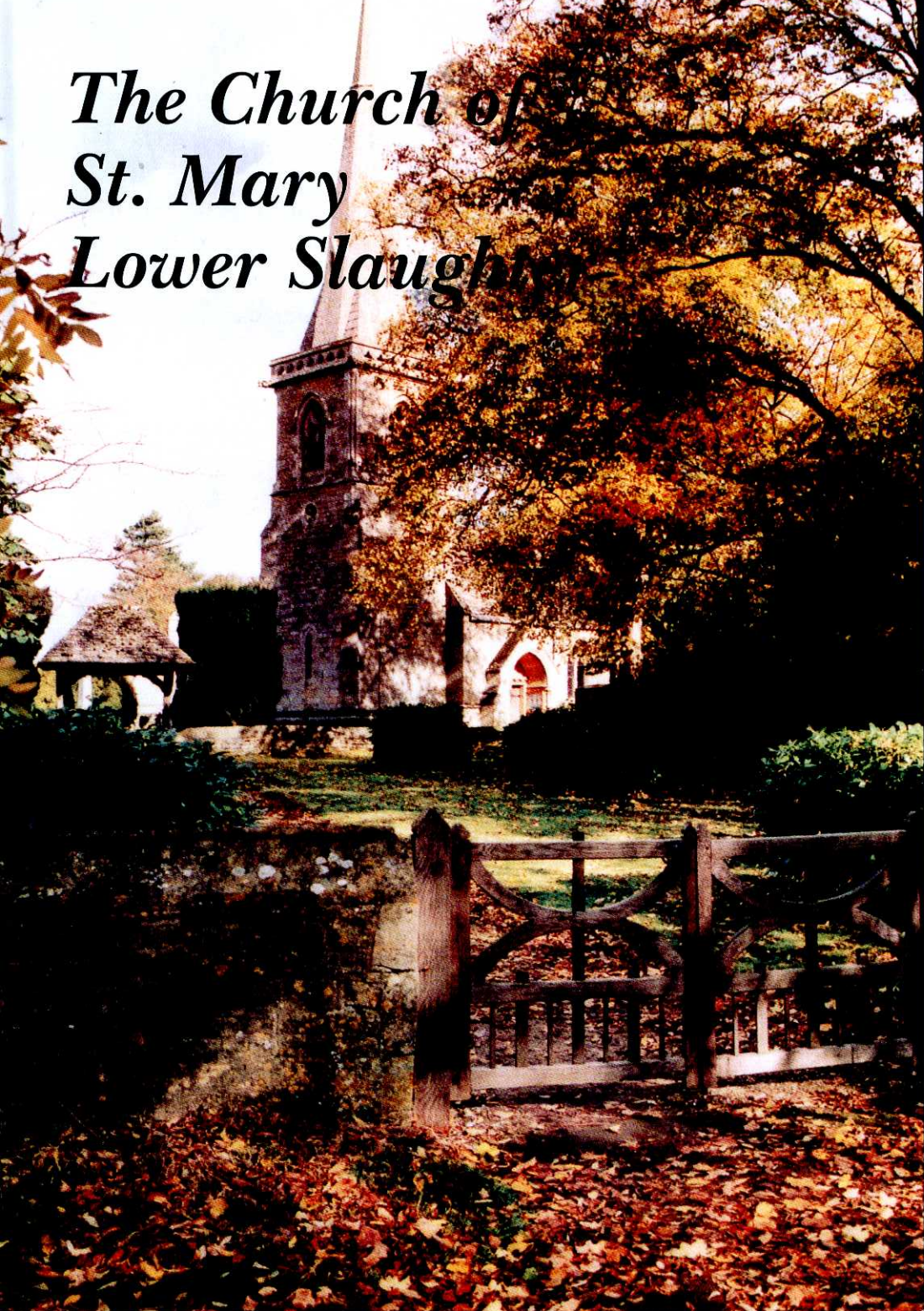


*The Church of
St. Mary
Lower Slaughter*



Welcome to St. Mary's Church, Lower Slaughter

Like many churches built in the 13th century, the original church on this site was dedicated to St. Mary the mother of Jesus. The name Slaughter is thought to be a corruption of the word *slohtre* meaning a marshy place - probably an apt description before the river was channelled into its present course.

The First Church

The original church was built of stone with a small tower and saddleback roof. There are two prints of the old church on the south wall. It is recorded that by 1851 a gallery had been installed which may have been used by village musicians to accompany the services.

As with many churches, this one was neglected and by the 1860s was unsafe, and services were held in the Manor House next door. With the resurgence of faith in late Victorian times there was an upsurge in the repair and rebuilding of churches.

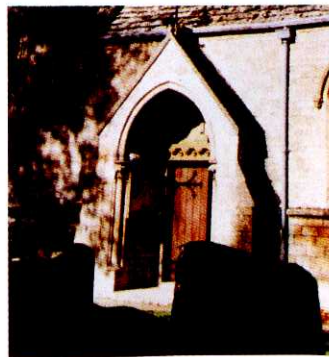
The Present Building

This was erected in 1867, the architect being Benjamin Ferrey. His design is based on on the 'Early English' and 'Decorated' styles.

Somewhat unusually for the Cotswolds, the church has a fine spire. Spires are seen as a symbol of man's aspiration to be united with his Creator, of local pride, or as a signpost for travellers. Perhaps all three apply in this case.

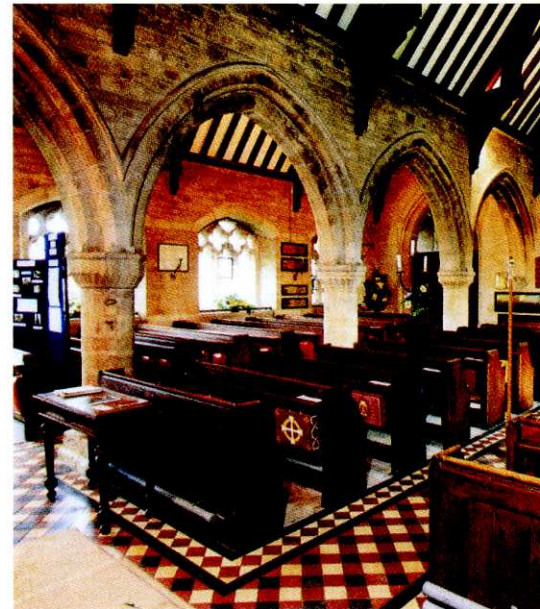
The Porch

The porch protects the main door, but historically a porch was of special significance. Marriages were sometimes conducted there and agreements and contracts sealed there.



The Interior

The Font is used for baptisms. The font was almost always positioned near the entrance to symbolise entry into the family of God. This is the beginning of the Nave (a word which comes from *navis* - a ship) where the congregation assemble for worship.



Looking down the nave you will notice the pewend candlesticks. Including those on the walls twenty seven candles are lit for church festival services and weddings.

Hanging from the North Aisle ceiling is the iron framework of one of the oil-lamps which was also used for illumination.

The Church Kneelers

Over the three years from 1992, 32 villagers (men as well as women) produced 50 kneelers for the nave. The patterns represent symbols related to the Church as well as the seasons, military and secular organisations.

Most of the kneelers are dedicated personally as memorials to loved ones or to groups of people e.g. those who lost their lives in the war.

At the far end of the nave we see the Pulpit on the right and the brass Lectern to the left, given in memory of Henry Edward Rose. It is a traditional symbolic design - the eagle, with wings outstretched to hold the Bible, stands on a sphere representing the word of God being spread throughout the world.



At the entrance to the **Chancel** you will see black marble columns on either side which are typically Victorian. Here is the seating for the choir and the stalls - on the right hand side for the priest and on the left for his assistant e.g. a lay reader. Christianity came to England from the south either directly with St. Augustine or via the Celtic church in Ireland. Thus the priest's stall traditionally faces to the north, symbolising his passing on the Good News of God. A step and the altar rail mark the entry into the Sanctuary.



The altar-rail kneeler was designed and worked by a villager, Mrs Mollie Watson. The

centre piece of the middle section portrays the letters I H S (*Iesu Hominum Salvator* - Jesus Saviour of Man). On either side is depicted a Chalice used to symbolise the Passion and the Greek letters A and Ω - Alpha and Omega, symbolising that God is the beginning and the end. The two outer kneelers incorporate crosses and a dove bearing an olive branch, representing peace.



Beyond is the **Altar** or communion table, which represents the table at which Christ and his disciples shared the Last Supper. Behind the altar is a fine alabaster reredos depicting the Crucifixion, brought from Italy and installed together with the east window in 1910 in memory of Charles Shepland Whitmore. The window was designed and made by

Powell, and depicts the Purification and Annunciation of St. Mary. A photograph (near the entrance) of the interior prior to 1910 shows how the east end of the church was changed to accommodate the reredos and new window.

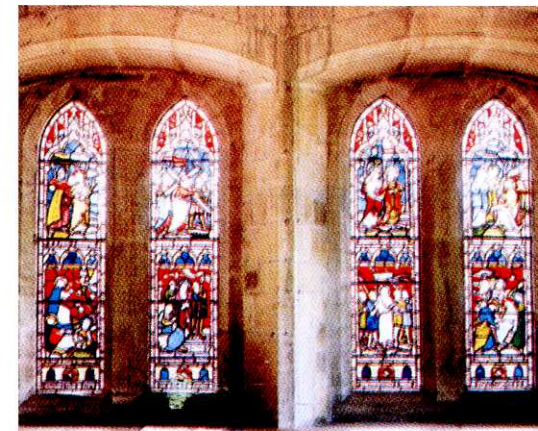
To the right of the altar is the **Piscina** from the early church which was used for washing the sacred vessels. It had a drain to the outside wall, now blocked in.

The Stained Glass

In addition to the east window there is:

A window dedicated to Edmund Henry Whitmore in the north wall, In the west wall of the north aisle a rose window and two windows below - both of which were the gift of Emma Browning in 1867.

There is a small lancet window in the Tower.



Memorials

Most of the memorials are to members of the Whitmore family who lived in the Manor House for some 300 years. On the south wall there is a tablet recording Sir Anthony Milward who had been Chairman of British European Airways, and a memorial with a fine dedication to Sarah Ann Yearp.

On the west wall is a Cradle Roll covering baptisms from 1964 - 1990, and on the north wall is a record of the clergy associated with the church and a list of benefactors at the time of the rebuilding.

War Memorial

The memorial cross is in the churchyard and the memorial on the west wall in the church are memorials to all those from this village who served in the First World War. The names of those who died are starred.

The Bells

Six bells are mounted in the Tower, the oldest c.1450 made by Robert Hendley of Gloucester and inscribed *Santa Anna ORA Pro Nobis* (St. Anne, pray for us). Two others dated 1683 were cast by Edward Neale of Burford, and three were installed in 1867 when the church was rebuilt, cast by Messrs John Warner & Sons of London.

The Organ

The organ was built by Nicholson's of Worcester. It has a single manual with six speaking stops, and a pedal board with a single stop, together with a manual to pedal coupler. It received a major overhaul in the 1980s and it is largely in its original condition including the old 'tracker' action.

The Plate

The most important items are a silver chalice and pattern cover dated 1576.

The Churchyard

Recorded burials date from 1770. Some early gravestones will be found near the entrance, and to the north of the church are some recently restored table tombs.

Beyond the churchyard a piece of land was given as an extension when required. Until that time it is kept as an area for wild plants and grasses.

The Dovecote

Immediately beyond the churchyard wall in the north-east corner is a 16th century dovecote - the largest in the county, and said to have held 1000 birds.



Initially the village was part of the parish of Bourton-on-the-Water and from the 16th to the 18th century the church was referred to as a Chapel of Ease. In 1954 Upper and Lower Slaughter with Eyford were made into a united benefice. Naunton was added in 1957 and in 1991 a second benefice consisting of the parishes of Guiting Power and Temple Guiting was added to the Rector's responsibilities.

Lower Slaughter is a parish of approximately 200 souls. Over the centuries the church has occupied an essential place in the life of the village. You are one of the many visitors who come from all over the world. We hope you will find peace here and an awareness of the presence of God and that you will take with you our prayer for God's guidance and protection in your life.



