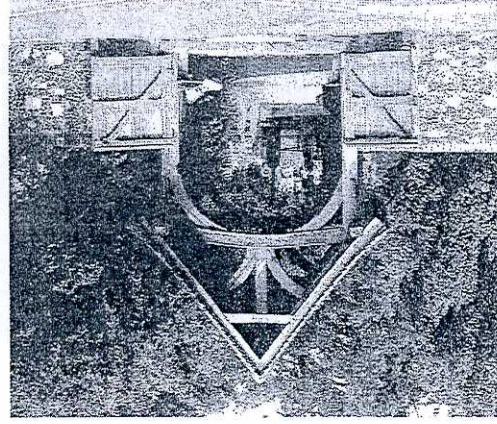


St Martin's, Canterbury
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A tour of the Churchyard

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*Being the stories of some of the  
people buried there.*  
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The
Entrance
through
the
Lychgate



The
Church
from
the
terrace

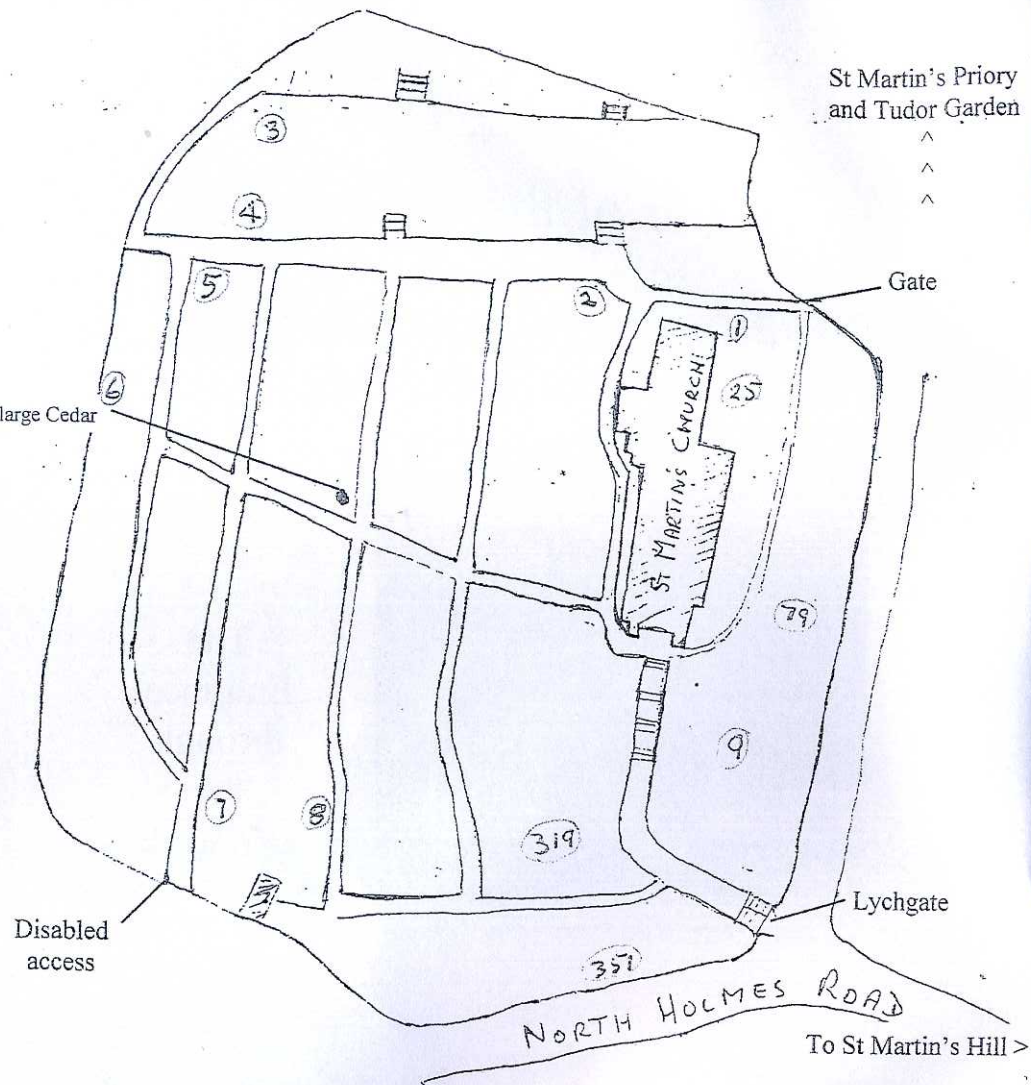
THE CHURCHYARD OF ST MARTIN'S CHURCH, CANTERBURY

St Martin's Churchyard contains at least 900 graves, amongst them those of many people eminent in Canterbury, or wider afield, in their time. Many are aware that Mary Tourtel, the inventor of Rupert Bear, is buried on the upper terrace, and the grave of the famous Canterbury artist Thomas Sydney Cooper who died in 1902 aged 99 is in the central lowest part. But many other famous people and others who reached high levels in the society of their day are buried here.

In this Churchyard are the graves of 4 Bishops, 2 Archdeacons, 2 Deans, 16 Canons, 2 Precentors, and at least 14 other priests. Among those from the armed forces are 2 Admirals, a Vice-Admiral, a General, a Major-General, a Brigadier-General, and, among the other laity, a Knight, a Judge, a Prison Governor, a Headmaster, and a Cathedral Organist.

The oldest marked graves are under the large yew trees to the South of the church. The earliest date to be seen is 1686 (grave no. 79) on the headstone of the grave of Thomas Emptage of this parish and Mary, his wife. He died on 4th January 1686 and she died on 1st July 1708. This may not be the oldest stone as it may have been erected after his wife's death. The oldest stone may well be that on the grave of a daughter of Austen and Elizabeth Neame which is dated 1692 (grave no. 25). The daughter's name is obscured as this stone has severely flaked – unlike the stone of Thomas and Mary Emptage, the carving on which is still very clear. Obviously the quality of the Emptage stone is much higher than that of the Neame stone, and also of many later stones which have weathered badly.

This dating of the earliest stones matches that of churchyards across England. Prior to the later years of the 17th century graves may have been marked with wooden crosses or memorials which have since been lost. However it may be that there were few, if any, burials in this churchyard before the seventeenth century. Certainly burials of the laity took place in the grounds of St Augustine's Abbey until 1591 – hence the name of the gateway opposite the end of Church Street St Paul's which is still known as the Cemetery Gate. It was in 1591 that the graveyard for St Paul's Church was opened in Longport. The parish of St Martin was united with that of St Paul in 1681. St Paul's graveyard was closed in 1951 and the stones there were later moved to the boundaries, when the City Council became responsible for its maintenance. St Martin's Churchyard was closed in 1977 after which the City Council likewise became responsible for its maintenance.



Plan of St Martin's Churchyard

With the location of graves referred to in the text marked with their reference numbers as used in the text.

Details of the graves and of the people whose last resting place is in St Martin's Churchyard.

We are fortunate that the inscriptions on the graves were recorded by the Kent Family History Society and printed in the Society's Publication number 18 in 1984. This is particularly so as the inscriptions on many of the monuments are gradually becoming more obscure as the stones erode. Also there was a period of severe vandalism in the late 1980's/ early 1990's when many memorials were broken. Fortunately many were repaired with grant aid at the instigation of Dr David Edmonds by 1997 - the 1400th Anniversary of the coming of St Augustine to Canterbury. Since that time the City Council have met their obligation to mow the grass between the graves, and local residents and families of the departed have kept the graves tidy.

We are also fortunate that the Reverend Robert LLOYD has taken a special interest in the life histories of many of those buried in the churchyard. Much of the detail in this booklet has been written by Robert LLOYD.

Other details are based on articles written a few years ago by John Wise for the Parish Magazine (*Pilgrim Post*).

We are extremely grateful for the work that David Edmonds, Robert LLOYD, John Wise, and the Kent Family History Society have put into researching and recording people and events related to St Martin's Churchyard. We must also record our thanks to the members of the International Council on Monuments and Sites whose work resulted in St Martin's Church and Churchyard becoming part of the Canterbury World Heritage Site in 1988.

Our thanks go to all of the above persons and organisations whose attention to the historic nature of St Martin's has enabled the production of this guide.

*The Rector and Churchwardens
May 2005*

**A TOUR OF THE CHURCHYARD DESCRIBED BY
THE REVEREND ROBERT LLOYD**

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*Leave the Church by the West door, turn to the left and go to the extreme south-east corner of the Church. Here is:-*

**Grave no. 1 – Julian and Burgon Bickersteth**

This is the grave of two of the six sons of Samuel Bickersteth, Canon Residentiary of Canterbury Cathedral 1916 – 1936. These two brothers, both unmarried, had dramatic careers on the Western Front in 1914–18. Both won the Military Cross, Julian as Chaplain, Burgon as combatant (he remained a layman). Their military experiences are set out in *The Bickersteth Diaries*, edited by John Bickersteth, their nephew, son of Monier the eldest brother. (John Bickersteth became Bishop of Bath and Wells, one before George Carey).

After the War the brothers went far apart. Julian became Headmaster of St Peter's, Adelaide (sometimes called 'The Eton of Australia'), returning in the mid 1930's to be Headmaster of the Essex public school, Felsted, and then from 1943 – 58 Archdeacon of Maidstone and Canon Residentiary of Canterbury Cathedral.

Burgon had a long career up to 1947 as Head of Hart House, Toronto, one of Canada's leading teacher training colleges. He eventually raised a great deal of money for the restoration of The Greyfriars in Canterbury from Canada – which is why there is a memorial plaque to him in that building.

The brothers were reunited in Canterbury in 1947, and as their elderly mother was still alive there were three Bickersteths in the Precincts for some years. Burgon was a leading light in prison visiting and far out-lived his brother. Julian died in 1962 and Burgon in 1979.

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*Move on past the East end of the Church to a tall Cross, second left:-*

**Grave no. 2 – Edward Parry, 1830 – 1890**

Edward Parry, Bishop of Dover and Archdeacon of Canterbury, was the son of a Rear Admiral and father of an Admiral. His effigy is on the north side of the Cathedral Nave. There had been 3 Suffragan Bishops of Dover in the 16th Century, but Edward Parry was the first of all "modern" Suffragans to be appointed in the country.

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*Go along to and up the second flight of steps leading up to the graves on the terrace, then turn left and in the back row fifth along is:-*

**Grave no. 3 – Mary Tourtel, died 1948**

Mary Tourtel, the authoress of many children's books and the creator of the world famous *Rupert Bear*. She lived in her later life in what is now the Chaucer Hotel, on the wall of which in Ivy Lane is a blue plaque commemorating her. This grave is the most sought after of all in the churchyard.

+ + + + +

*Go next to the front row on the terrace and to the only tall gravestone there. This is:-*

**Grave no. 4 – Frederick Brodie MacNutt, died 1949**

Frederick Brodie MacNutt a priest who spent a lifetime in the Leicester Diocese, ending up as Provost (Dean) of Leicester Cathedral. He became Canon Residentiary here in Canterbury when well into his 60's in 1938. He had rather a sad time. His sermon on 3rd September 1939 came to an abrupt end when the air raid warning went off (false alarm!) but a much more serious matter came in October 1940 when his house in the Precincts received a direct hit in an air raid and he and his wife lost virtually everything. The site is now occupied by the post-war house of the Headmaster of Kings School. Luckily the MacNutts were away at the time of the raid. They returned to live in Leicester and F.B.M. came to Canterbury when he was 'in residence' to rooms in St Augustine's College (otherwise unoccupied in the War). In the spring of 1945 with the War coming to an end MacNutt retired, obviously with the idea that a younger man should share the post-war

problems. But it was decided to reduce the Residentiary Canons from five to four and his Canonry has never been filled.

MacNutt is - and was - well known for his collection of Prayers published in a book - *'The Prayer Manual'* which went through edition after edition until the 1980's. I still use it. (When I say 'his collection of prayers', I mean prayers of other people he had collected, though there were some of his own.)

+ + + + +

*Now go down the steps, turn right and the grave fully covered by stone close to the big security camera post, which is:-*

**Grave no. 5 – Lord Alwyne Compton, 1825 – 1906**

The younger son of the Marquis of Northampton, Dean of Worcester 1879 – 1885, Bishop of Ely 1885 – 1905. In 1905, aged 80, he retired, very unusual for those days, and presumably came to live in Canterbury. He lived only one more year. Why his body was not taken back to Ely nobody in Canterbury or Ely has ever been able to tell me. Maybe his wife was frail and could not face the long journey to Ely. I don't know. What is certain is that had he been buried in the shadow of his Cathedral amongst other Bishops and Deans, his grave would be in a much better condition today than it is in St Martin's Churchyard! The lump on top of it, now covered in moss, are the arms of the See of Ely.

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*Go down the path about thirty yards. Look right where the fir cones are (!) and against the hedge is :-*

**Grave no. 6 – Canon Arthur Robinson, 1856 – 1928,  
and his wife Mary Beatrice Robinson, 1879 – 1975**

Arthur came to Canterbury as a Residentiary Canon during the First World War, in his early sixties, having spent almost half of his ministry as Vicar of All Hallows by the tower in the City of London. He came here unmarried, but had not been in Canterbury long when - (this story is in the Oxford University Press *History of Canterbury Cathedral* published in 1995) - he wrote a letter to a Miss Moore, daughter of a fellow Canon and years younger than himself, asking her to come and see him. She went along thinking she was going to a meeting about

the Cathedral – but no, he proposed marriage to her! And married they were, his father-in-law, Canon Moore being younger than himself! The marriage produced 2 brilliant children. John the son became Bishop of Woolwich and author of the controversial best seller 'Honest to God', but sadly died in his early 60's. The daughter spent her life teaching and head of games at Roedean, most famous of girls' schools. She was Captain of England at cricket and took a side out to Australia in, I suppose, the late 1940's. She lives in Cranbrook and comes over to tend the grave before festivals. She has been to lunch, and it is remarkable in the 21st century to meet a person whose father was born in 1856! I knew old Mrs Robinson fairly well – at the cricket. She was one of those people who could quote anything about the game out of her head. She lived until 1975 and so was a widow for nearly 50 years. On one occasion she expressed the hope that an incoming Kent batsman would do well. "He got a good score at Tunbridge Wells this year when I saw him." "You went to Tunbridge Wells?" I replied astonished. "Yes, I always go" she said "early start, bus to Ashford, about half an hour's wait, bus to Tunbridge Wells. Back same way in reverse. A bit late home." She was then over 90! Must have been proud of her daughter. Well, she was. No relation of the modern Canon Robinson.

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*Go down to the bottom of the path to the left of the gate.*

**Grave no. 7 – Thomas Karl Sopwith, 1873–1945  
and his wife, Esme Marian Sopwith, died 1948**

I knew them fairly well. Sopwith had a 'good view' in the Diocese being successively Vicar of Ashford, then of Maidstone, followed by Archdeacon of Maidstone, and then Archdeacon of Canterbury, the last two combined with being a Residentiary Canon. He retired in 1942, but re-emerged in 1943 to be Vicar of Hollingbourne. He died at Christmas 1945 after "catching a chill" at the funeral of Archbishop Lord Lang in the Cathedral. The Cathedral had several winters of being cold and unheated as the system was knocked out in an air-raid. Daily services were in the Crypt, but the funeral was upstairs in the Nave. He was a cousin of the well known yachtsman of that name.

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*Go along the path at the bottom of the Churchyard and take the first turn left. A few yards up on the left with chains hanging round it is :-*

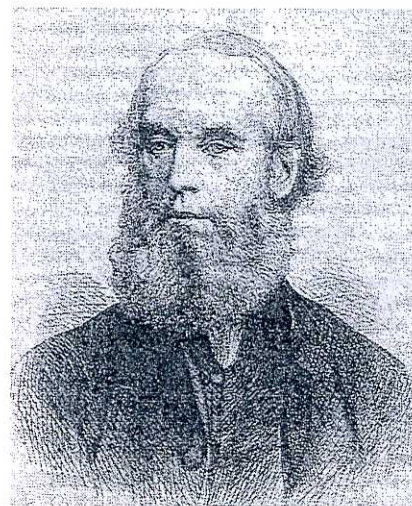
**Grave no. 8 – Sydney Thomas Cooper, 1803–1902**

Sydney Cooper lived to a great age, and is Canterbury and Kent's most famous artist. He specialised in cows and horses amidst lush scenery. Go to the Beaney Institute in Canterbury to see some good paintings of his.

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*Go back to the path along the bottom of the Churchyard and follow this to the main path near the lychgate and turn left up towards the Church. On the right under the big yew tree is:-*

**Grave no. 9 – Henry Alford, 1810–1871**



Henry Alford was Dean of Canterbury from 1857 till 1871 when he died aged 61. A habit at this time was to dig people out of obscurity and to give them rather leading appointments. This happened to Alford who came to the Deanery from the even now remote and rural village of Wymeswold in Leicestershire. He was a great hymn writer – so it is good to have another such Dean today (Robert Willis). Alford's best known hymn, one of the best known in our language, is "Come ye thankful people, come" followed by "Ten thousand times ten thousand".

Another hymn, still sung in my youth but little today, is "Forward be our watchword". The last hymn he is said to have written in the Cathedral. It was needed for a big processional occasion – and he marched round several times privately to make sure that the hymn was exactly the right length.

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*I think that is enough. Go back to the Church and give thanks for the lives of those who have gone on their pilgrimage before us.*

*Revd. Robert LLoyd*

**FURTHER DESCRIPTIONS OF SOME OF THOSE WHOSE  
LAST RESTING PLACE IS IN THIS CHURCHYARD.**

The following four descriptions were written by John Wise and were published in the Parish Magazine "*Pilgrim Post*" some years ago under the general title "*Characters from the Past*." These are republished here to add to the information provided by Revd. Robert LLOYD.

**Canon Charles Francis Routledge M.A. FSA 1838 - 1904**

He was educated at Eton and King's College, Cambridge and was ordained Deacon by the Bishop of Lincoln. After one year as Curate, he became one of His Majesty's Inspectors for schools and later came to Kent in the same capacity.

He lived in the shade of St Martin's Church and the important discoveries made in later years in its structure were mainly due to his enterprise. His book on St Martin's Church is a valuable contribution to its history.

He was made a Canon in 1874 by Archbishop Tait and wrote a report on bones discovered in the Crypt which were believed by some to be those of St Thomas a Becket. He was also superintendent of the excavations in the Abbey Fields of St Augustine's.

He was associated with a scheme which introduced night schools for young people in the early 1850s. These were held three nights a week when the youngsters were given "bread and cheese and other food good for the mind". On bread and cheese nights, the young people came in crowds!

**The grave of Canon Routledge is the large cross at the bottom of the Churchyard to the left of the main path near the wall by North Holmes Road. No. 351 on the plan.**

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**Hilare, Countess Nelson and Duchess of Bronte, died 1857**

Hilare, Countess Nelson, or strictly Mrs George Knight, is one of the three daughters of Rear Admiral Sir Robert Barlow GCB who share a tomb in St Martin's Churchyard. The eldest, Elizabeth Anne Barlow, died in 1866, but details of the youngest can no longer be deciphered from the eroded stone.

Hilare was married three times, the first to a cousin, George Ulric Barlow, but both her later husbands have interesting historical and literary connections.

William Nelson (1757 - 1835) was the brother of Horatio Nelson. He was ordained in 1874 and became a Canon of Canterbury Cathedral in 1803. On the death of Horatio in 1805, the Nelson viscountcy was raised to an earldom and conferred on William "in consideration of the eminent services of his brother". He also inherited Horatio's Sicilian Dukedom of Bronte. His wife Sarah died in 1828 and one year later he married the widowed Hilare Barlow.

William Nelson died in 1835 and Hilare married for the third time, in 1837, George Thomas Knight. As was the custom in those days, she continued to use the titles of Countess Nelson and Duchess of Bronte. Technically she was Mrs George Knight and the sister-in-law of Horatio Nelson, although he had died 24 years before she married William.

Her third husband, George Thomas Knight, was the second son of Edward Austen, Jane Austen's brother, who was adopted by Mr George Knight of Godmersham and took the name of Knight when he succeeded to the estate.

**Hilare's grave is to be seen as the fourth from the lamp post to the left of the main path as it turns to go up to the west door of the Church. No. 319 on the plan.**

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### Thomas Sidney Cooper, 1803 – 1902

Sidney Cooper was born in St Peter's Street on 28 September 1803, one of five children left to be brought up by their dressmaker mother when she was deserted by her husband. Leaving school at 12 he started work as a coachpainter for the uncle of a school friend, William Burgess.

In 1818 he went to work as a scene painter at the local theatre where he developed his skills in landscape and perspective. In 1824 he gained entry to the Royal Academy Schools but training was soon cut short when he lost the support of an uncle on whom he was dependent.

He returned to Canterbury and more coachpainting with Burgess. In 1827, accompanied by William Burgess he went to live in Belgium where he began to make a reputation as an artist and teacher.

He returned to England in 1831 and achieved immediate success when in 1833 he exhibited his first picture in Britain. He was elected RA in 1867. He made a great deal of money and acquired a lot of property in Canterbury, including Vernon Holme at Harbledown (now Kent College Junior School) and Vernon Grange in the Old Dover Road. He was a generous benefactor of his native city, providing funds for building the Theatre Royal in Guildhall Street when the "Old Stagers" found themselves without a theatre. He founded the Sidney Cooper Gallery (later to become the Canterbury College of Art and School of Architecture) to encourage young artists.

He died on 7 February 1902 and is buried in St Martin's churchyard by the path running north from the lychgate. **Grave no. 8 on the plan.**

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### Dean Henry Alford 1810 –1871

His mother died at his birth and he was brought up by relatives. He was a private pupil of the Reverend John Bickersteth, Dean of Lichfield and later Bishop of Ripon. After leaving college he became Vicar of Wymeswold. He then became Dean of Canterbury in 1857 and held this post until he died in 1871.

At college he was a contemporary of Tennyson and Wordsworth. He himself wrote many poems including the well known hymns "*Come ye thankful people, come*" and "*Ten thousand times ten thousand*".

He had many accomplishments including composing music for piano and organ choral works. He was a wood carver and a water colour painter and wrote his first sermon at the age of ten.

On coming to Canterbury he took a great interest in the restoration of the Cathedral. The statues on the west porch were obtained by subscriptions raised by him. He is probably best known in ecclesiastical circles for his work on the Greek Testaments.

He founded the Alford Aid Society in Canterbury for the poor and needy.

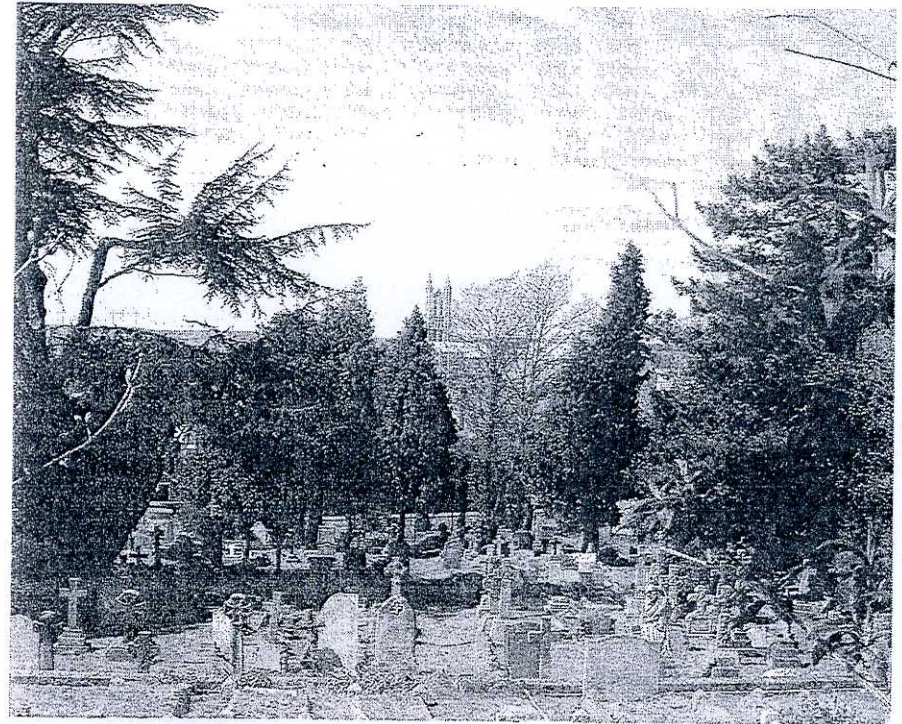
**Henry Alford's grave is to be found under the large yew tree on the right of the main path up to the Church. No. 9 on the plan.**

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## Memorials inside St Martin's Church

Whilst this booklet relates to the memorials in the Churchyard surrounding St Martin's Church, there are also many memorials within the Church itself, including two important brasses in the floor of the sanctuary. A copy of one of these brass memorials is on the right in the porch. On the opposite wall (the north wall) of the porch is the largest of the internal wall memorials, having been moved here from the south wall of the Sanctuary in the 1950's. The inscription on this is in Latin, a translation of which is:-

This marble monument is dedicated to John Finch, Knight Bachelor and Baron of Fordwich, who, although born not to a common but noble family, still made his way by his own merits to the highest honours. For through his skill in pleading cases he became Advocate General and Chancellor to Queen Maria. Through his distinction and eloquence he was chosen Speaker of the Lower Chamber in the Parliament of the whole kingdom. Through his absolute integrity in judgements he was appointed Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas. Through his singular prudence in political affairs he became a member of his Royal Majesties Privy Council. Finally through his tested achievements in all matters he became a most worthy keeper of the Great Seal. He discharged his succession of public duties with the greatest distinction and to the greatest benefit to the state. While he was permitted to, but after, through the injustice of the times, he was no longer able to be present in the country with safety, by remaining honourably in hiding he lived honourably, until Charles II restored by the grace of God to his subjects, bought with him the restoration of all fortunes. Then, at last, he was summoned with others by the command of the King to pronounce most just sentence on the accursed lives of the regicides. When he had discharged this task which was the will of God, his duty to his King and pleasing to the people, filled with honours and full of days he passed from here to the ancient of days in the 77th year of his life on 20th November AD 1660.



**The View from the top of the Churchyard  
with the Cathedral in the background**