

# The Origins and Location of St Andrew's Church, Canterbury



CCA-map 123 a civic map of the liberty of Canterbury from c.1642 showing St Andrew's church, conduit and shambles. Courtesy of Canterbury Cathedral Archives.

The Domesday Survey of 1086 tells us that when William the Conqueror built his new castle in Canterbury, he levelled property owned by St Augustine's Abbey. In recompense for this, the Abbot was granted lands elsewhere in Canterbury. Additionally, he was allowed to build his church of St Andrew on the king's highway which he duly did in 1090. The church was built in the middle of the main street thereby forming what was called the 'middle row' which is known today as the Parade. The street ran east-west and therefore would have suited the orientation of a church, but it must have narrowed the road considerably with traffic having to pass on what was left of the road on the north and south sides.



William I from The Rous Roll by John Rous Courtesy of the British Library. 1483-1485. Add. 48976



Shield device from Canterbury Cathedral Cloister courtesy of the Heraldry Society.

The western door of the church opened onto the crossing of Mercery Lane and St Margarets Street with the High Street, where 3 premises owned by Christ Church Priory were situated. After 1170, pilgrims coming from London would have turned left at the church when travelling to the site of Thomas Becket's martyrdom in Canterbury Cathedral and St Andrew's would therefore have become a well-known landmark. After 1390 the church door would have been opposite the super-inn The Cheker of the Hope which was built with these pilgrims in mind. Also on this junction were shops owned by the church. The rents from these are found in the churchwardens' accounts as are payments made by the church for the cleaning of the street. This tells us that while the church benefited from its central location, this carried with it certain responsibilities.



A man in a pillory from: Newes from Smith the Oxford Jaylor, 1645 Courtesy of the British Library archive

To the east of the church were a pillory and butchers' stalls. This market was known as the Shambles and was regulated by the city corporation. Medieval markets were set up in large open spaces often in front of churches, so the roads around them were made as wide as possible to allow carts to pass one another coming and going. This could be seen in Longport, a contested area being the king's highway but outside the Liberty of Canterbury and claimed by St Augustine's Abbey. However, St Andrew's gave the Abbot a toehold in a market within the city walls.



Arms of the City of Canterbury Courtesy of the Heraldry Society, The three coughs are taken from the arms of Thomas Becket.

The church received rent from the stables it owned on Pillory Lane and many other properties which made it very wealthy for an urban church, at least before the Henrician Reformation. After 1620 a conduit was built next to the church on the eastern side. This was a gift from Archbishop Abbot and provided water to the city's heart. Although topographically a small parish, St Andrew's was located near to the processional way between the cathedral and the castle. As a central parish, it was in the city's commercial district, being under the patronage of St Augustine's Abbey until the Dissolution. Thus, it was valued by its parishioners and the major ecclesiastical authorities in Canterbury, as well as by the civic authorities. Its churchwardens after 1605 were commonly aldermen of Canterbury or members of the common council creating close ties between the parish church and city council. Examples from 1606 were John Pearce and Henry Bridge who became members of the common council after serving as churchwardens for a year.

# The Saints of St Andrews



Crucifixion of St Andrew by Gerard Horenbout  
From Sforza Hours c.1490. Courtesy of The British Library Archive.

In St Andrew's church, there were known to be dedications to many saints other than the patron. These can be found in the wills of parishioners who left gifts for lights (candles) to be dedicated to them. This practice was common in pre-reformation churches and was seen as a good work to reduce time in purgatory by invoking the help of the saint in question. While gifts may have been made to a saint's painted image, other saints such as St Katherine and St Tronion had their own altars in the fore church or nave. St Andrews had a list of dedications one would usually expect to find in a church such as the Virgin Mary, Saint Christopher and the two Saint Johns, (the Baptist and the Apostle). Also found here are those less common such as St Ninian, St Tronion, St Armygil, St Ursula and St Erasmus. Of these St Armygill and St Tronion are most elusive as inconsistencies in naming and spelling can make them hard to trace.



The legend of St Ursula varies a little between sources, but she was believed to be a 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>-century British woman murdered on return from pilgrimage in the company of 11 thousand virgins. She is seen here under attack from the city of Cologne in hand-painted wood cut of 1480-1490, courtesy of the British Museum.

St Erasmus was a 4<sup>th</sup>-century bishop and martyr and was the patron saint of sailors. He was possibly killed as a result of the Roman Emperor Diocletian's persecution of the Christians. In 1500 John Brokenbanke bequeathed a taper of one lb. of wax for his light in St Andrews.



Martyrdom of St Erasmus 15<sup>th</sup> century Metal Cut fifteenth-century Courtesy of The MET.



A 15<sup>th</sup>-century pilgrim badge of St Armel possibly from the shrine at Westminster Abbey. On the left is a depiction of the dragon, Armel is clothed in a chasuble over armour which is typical in representations of him. The badge is of lead alloy and the image is courtesy of the Museum of London.

In 1528 Edward Bolney bequeathed a taper as a light for St Armygill. This is likely a variant spelling of Armagill and Armel. Images of Saint Armel could have been found in the Lady Chapel at Westminster Abbey which was endowed and built by Henry VII to sanctify his half-uncle Henry VI. From this, we can tell that he was an important saint in the process of legitimising the Tudor dynasty. His image is also on the tomb of Archbishop John Morton in Canterbury Cathedral. St Armel was a 6<sup>th</sup>-century dragon-slaying saint of Welsh origin to whom a monastery was dedicated at St Armel-des-Boscheaux.

St Tronion is a bit of an enigma, as not much is known about him under this name, but he is found elsewhere. In 1536 James Burton bequeathed 8 pence to 'saint Tronion' in a Horncastle church. It is possible that he was the 7<sup>th</sup>-century St Trond. However, it has been suggested that he is a variant pronunciation of the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>-century Saint Ninian, who is sometimes called Trinian. St Ninian is credited with being the first Christian missionary to Scotland and it is tempting to associate his veneration here with St Andrew who has been Scotland's patron saint since 1320. As well as a Fraternity of St Tronion, both St Ninian and St Tronion received bequests in St Andrew's church. From the 1485 inventory, we know there were two side altars in St Andrew's church: to St Katherine and another to St Tronion. Yet in 1499 a local tailor, Richard Cook, bequeathed a blue covering to the altar of St Ninian – was this a new altar or were the altars of St Ninian and of St Tronion one and the same? The late wills also mention the Trinity altar.



The Virgin and St Ninian from a Book of Hours



Martyrdom of St Katherine from Salvin Hours 1275-1280, English. Courtesy of the British Library Shelf mark, Add. 48985.

# St Andrew's Vestments



Priest wearing vestments  
12<sup>th</sup> century German  
manuscript, courtesy of  
Digital Bodleian

The vestments of St Andrew's church can be found in the inventory of 1485. In this record, we can find whole suits as well as separately itemised copes and surpluses. It can be fairly assumed that these whole suits comprised the items found listed in the following panels. There are three of these suits in the inventory and they were paid for by bequests in the wills of parishioners: William Benet, John Harnett and William Bryan. Benet's gift was of crimson velvet and Harnett's of blue baudkin. Baudkin was a material of Byzantine origin and had been produced since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It was woven with a silk weft and a gold wool which produced a silken fabric shot with gold. Bryan's Suit was of white damask. This is a silk cloth with a pattern woven into it, this case one of 'watry flowers.' These materials would have been very expensive and were very generous donations, although in his will Benet had requested his vestments to be of red cloth of gold.

## Cope

A cope, as the name suggests, is much like a cape, reaching almost to the floor. In the 1485 inventory, St Andrews had one in red with vestments to match which were known as the Sunday vestments. For special feast days, the church owned a cope of cloth of gold which must have made its wearer look quite magnificent.



A priest wearing vestments including cope from a 14<sup>th</sup>-century Italian manuscript courtesy of Digital Bodleian.

## Chasuble

Also in cloth of gold we find a 'chesible' (chasuble). Around the 14<sup>th</sup>-century, the chasuble changed from a semicircular garment that covered the arms and reached the lower leg to a more bib-like affair worn over the surplice. As these styles were both worn at this time it is not certain which form those in St Andrew's church would have taken. The example opposite was cut down from the first style to create the second.



1330-50 Chasuble in Opus Anglicanum (English Work) courtesy of The MET Museum.

## Surplice

The surplice of the fifteenth century was a long white garment with extremely wide sleeves which dates back at least to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Surplices appear in the churchwardens' accounts through to the Elizabethan period. Copes and chasubles can be found in the churchwardens' accounts after 1536 but references to them soon disappear. While not strictly banned at the time of the Henrician reformation vestments were the subject of controversy at the highest level. After the time of Elizabeth I it is hard to tell what manner of vestments were in use at St Andrew's as they are referred to simply as church linen, but this in itself suggests that they were of much simpler form.



A man wearing a surplice from a French fifteenth-century book of hours courtesy of Digital Bodleian.

## Rochetts and Albs

Two rochetts are listed in the 1485 inventory these are similar to a surplice but are usually worn by bishops and are closer fitting without the wide sleeves. In the year 1545-6 a Mr Parson gave 6 'crysums' or baptism robes for the making of 2 rochetts it is possible that these higher status forms of surplice were preferred by clergy in the absence of the more elaborate vestments of times recently past.



A priest wearing an alb celebrates marriage outside a church door from the Grande Croniques de France Courtesy of Digital Bodleian.

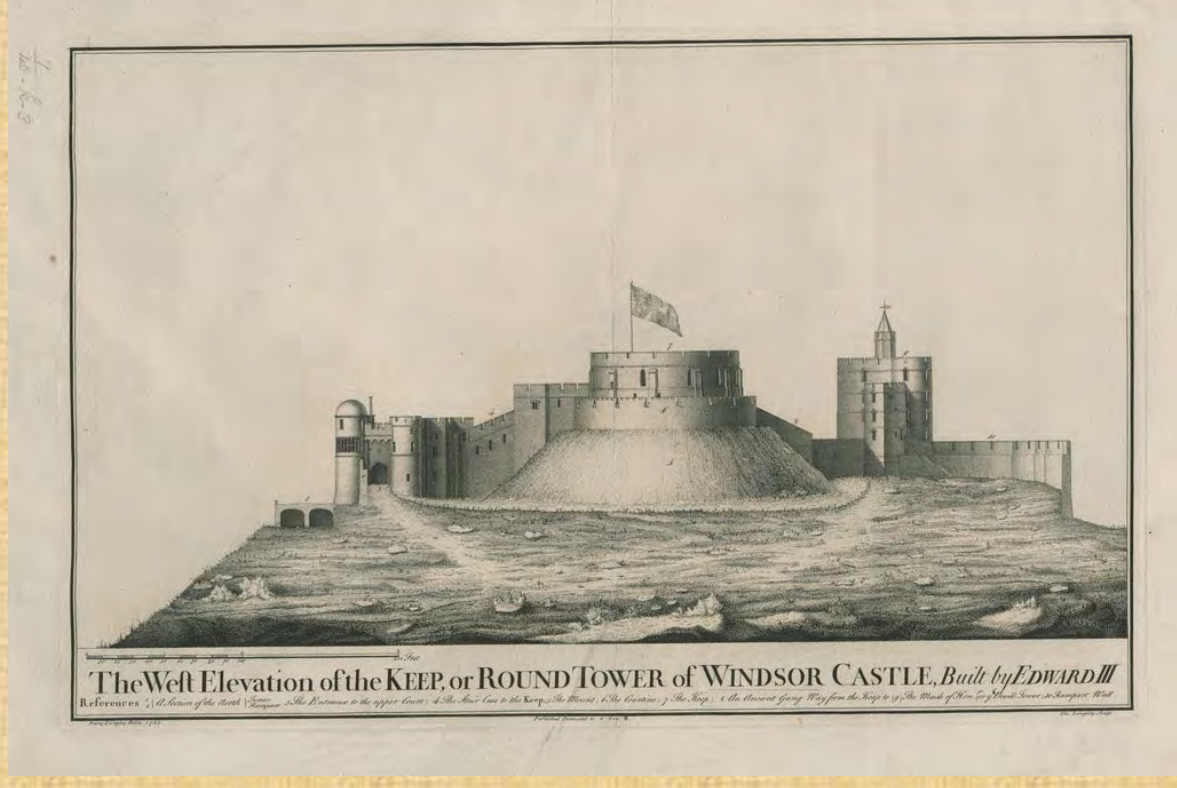
The accounts of 1546-7 have an entry for the resewing of albs after they were washed. These are a long vestment that did not appear by name in the 1485 inventory but may have been included in the items listed just as vestments. However, their late appearance here is curious as the surplice is thought to have been developed from the alb.

# The St Andrew's Clock

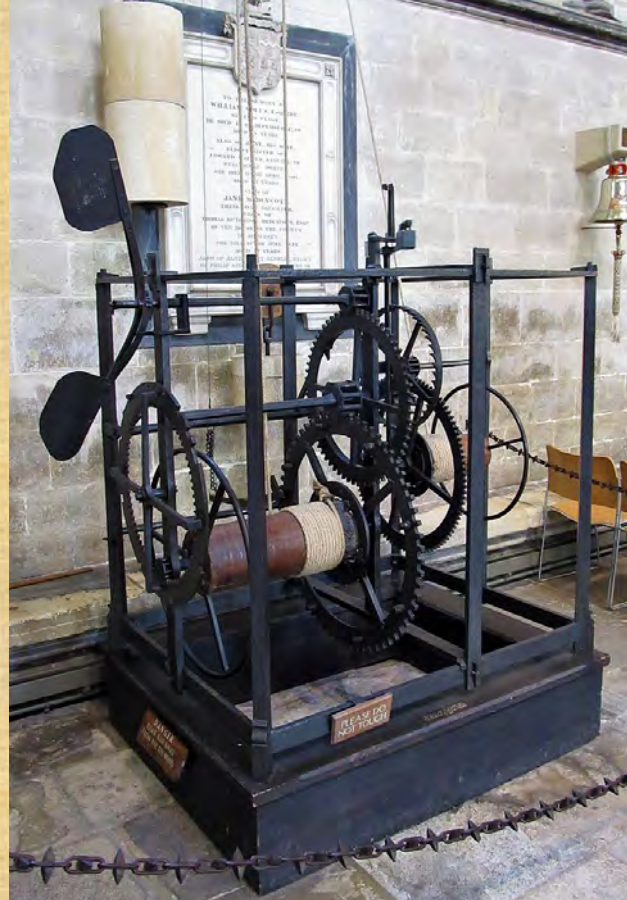


The St Andrew's clock is visible in the centre of this drawing from *A walk in and about the city of Canterbury with many observations not to be found in any description hitherto published*, the second edition, by William Gostling, M.A. 1777

The first recorded example of a clock in England appeared in 1352 on the Great Tower of Windsor Castle. By the 15<sup>th</sup>-century, 'turret clocks' (clocks with large dials), were common on larger churches. They were designed to be seen by many people from a distance.



The West Elevation of the KEEP, or ROUND TOWER of WINDSOR CASTLE, Built by Edward III by Batty Langley, 1743. © British Library Archive



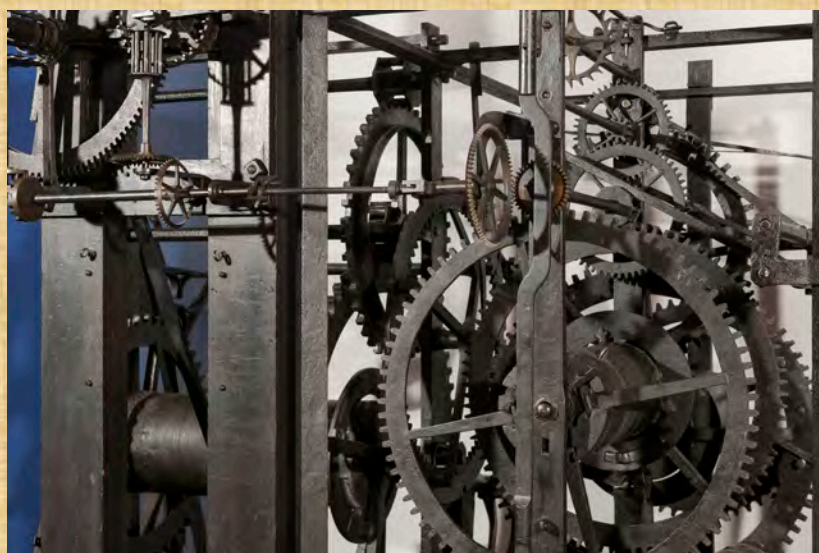
Medieval clock in Salisbury Cathedral, operating a bell in the tower. Supposedly dating from about 1386, restored in 1956 (Wikimedia Commons)

However, it is difficult to say precisely when they were first developed, but in England the earliest recorded clocks were found in cathedrals and major churches in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century. By today's standards these early clocks have enormous longevity: there is a 14<sup>th</sup>-century working example from Wells Cathedral in the Science Museum and there is another at Salisbury Cathedral.

Many of our churches are over six or seven hundred years old. After a church was built, the bell was installed as soon as possible, as it could be used to summon the parishioners to services, add to the solemnity of funerals and toll the curfew at dawn and dusk. The bell was either rung by the sexton or an official bellringer who was paid between five shillings (25 pence) and a pound a year for his work. Human nature being what it is, sometimes the bell was not rung on time, because the bell ringer either overslept, was ill, or got drunk.

Eventually when a mechanical method of ringing the bell was discovered, people in the wealthier towns and villages made use of it. Employers could more easily fix the start and end of the working day. For the first time all the inhabitants would have the same reference to the time of day, as everyone would hear the hours strike. As clocks were expensive to make, it was also a matter of local prestige and pride to have one.

Early church clocks did not look like the clocks of today. They were just a collection of gear wheels mounted in an iron frame and were simply designed to raise a hammer to strike the hours on a church bell.



Clock formerly in Wells Cathedral. © The board of Trustees of the Science Museum, London

The clocks were made of iron, had no dials, and the frame was about the size of a large chest of drawers. Power was supplied by a weight on a rope which was wound around the axle of a driving wheel mounted in the clock frame.

We have frequent records of the St Andrew's clock in the churchwardens' accounts: in his will of 1463 William Benet left 4 shillings and fourpence to, 'sustayne and keep the clock' of St Andrews church in perpetuity. This was just as well as the clock appears frequently as an expense in the churchwardens' accounts: it had four entries in the year 1485 including payments for repair and to its keeper, Thomas Cook, who was paid four shillings for his trouble. In the churchwardens' accounts of 1495-6, six shillings were paid to Bekylls for 'makyng of ye clock.' This suggests that he was paid for maintenance or serious repairs.

In 1509 12 pence was paid to the Chanon (Canon) of St Gregory's priory for mending the clock, which could tell us that the church had its own clock mender at this time and/or that St Gregory's also had a clock.

Such payments were still being made during the time of Henry VIII: for instance, Syr Georg, who was probably the priest at this time, was paid six shillings and eight pence for this service in 1545-6 and in 1546-7 three shillings and four pence were paid for its repair.