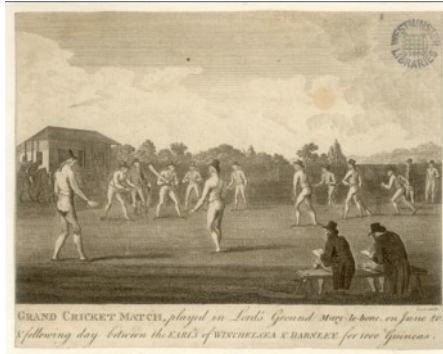


West Meon, St John the Evangelist

GU32 1LF

Although the church is notable as the first commission for the young Gilbert Scott (then aged 21) it is the graveyard that interests us:

- First there is a memorial cross in the place where there used to be a yew tree stump until 1861, it being the place where St Wilfred (633 – 709) is believed to have preached under its branches;
- Then there is a table tomb commemorating Thomas Lord (pictured here at Third Man), who lived in the village and in 1787 founded Lord's Cricket Ground (one wonders if there was a link with Hambledon Cricket Club – where the game first started – just 8 miles away);
- And then there are the remains of a less popular village resident – the spy Guy Burgess – whose ashes were scattered here.



But back to the church and don't miss the gargoyles and carved faces around the porch.



Hampshire and the Islands
Historic Churches Trust
DAYS OUT:
near Petersfield

These brief notes are intended to whet your appetite for the unusual and quirky secrets hidden in our churches. We have in Hampshire and the Islands the oldest bell in the world still being rung, Handel's organ, myriads of TV and Film locations and many other lovely oddities.

And, yes, please do tell us if you discover something we haven't spotted.

South East Hampshire

Nestling in the South Downs National Park, and on the route from London to Portsmouth, to some extent this area is detached from the rest of Hampshire. Perhaps this is why it is so especially attractive.



Copy link to get map: <https://tinyurl.com/mryrtazf>

Petersfield, St Peter GU32 3HS

Petersfield is a market town well worth a visit in itself (market days are Wednesday and Saturday). Inside the church is a new tracker organ built in 1991



But take a moment to look up at the capitals of the nave pillars: to the north they are round (symbolising God's perfection and infinity), while on the south they are square (symbolising the best that humans can achieve) – in other words the congregation are on a journey between earth and heaven

On your way out of the town, do look at the recently restored copper cupola on the roof of St Laurence RC Church (GU32 3ED)

Steep, All Saints, GU32 2DF

Located close to Bedales School, there are several examples of the work of 20th century craftsmen and women in this ancient church. Most poignant is the engraved glass window in memory of the local poet Edward Thomas killed at the battle of Arras in 1917.

But look at the stone floor of the chancel: in 1968 the Victorian tiles were removed and replaced with York stone, which once formed part of London Bridge.



East Meon, All Saints GU32 1NL

One of the finest historic churches in Hampshire, with a black Tournai marble font very similar to the one in Winchester Cathedral; this is because they were both a gift around 1140 from Bishop Henry de Blois.

Notice the rare arms of James 1, the modern triangular organ built in 1983 and the lovely Millennium embroidery made by 40 hands.

But don't miss the "Amens Plenty" stone plaque on the east wall of the south transept. This originally marked the graves of four Parliamentary soldiers killed the Battle of Cheriton in 1644 who were all found to have been buried vertically.



in

Privett, Holy Trinity GU34 3PE

In 1863, William Nicholson of the firm of J & W Nicholson & Co, Gin Distillers, built this spectacular medieval style church for his estate workers. It was designed by Sir A W Blomfield and completed between 1876 and 1878 with Italian marble mosaic floors and stunning stained glass.

Sadly the size of the new church (the spire is 130 feet tall) far outstripped the requirements of the small rural parish, and it is now cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust.

