

A History of Saint Michael the Archangel

The Parish Church of South Malling

By Sue Ladipo

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Photograph of Malling Church from the Deanery Spring 2000

Jim Bolter (East Sussex Record Office (ESRO) PAR 419 7/4/14)

In Memory of

Frances Hope Nicholl 1920 - 2001

A saintly lady and much loved member of the congregation
whose family has worshipped in and served this church for much of the twentieth century.

Introduction

The passing tourist does not often visit the Parish Church of South Malling. Firstly, it is not easily found, tucked away as it is at the end of an obscure little road beyond the new industrial estate and lying on the other side of the river from the town of Lewes. Secondly, the little church, despite its picturesque setting, has little to offer inside. Its very simplicity and modern interior belie its history. However, around it are the traces of at least twelve centuries of Christian worship. And possibly more, for this could be among the earliest sites of Christian faith in Sussex.

Beyond the church the road degenerates into a private rough track ending abruptly on the east bank of the river. One senses that there would have been a bridge or a river crossing nearby, and indeed there was, and more than one. This is a story of a monastery and a church that, like the bridges, are no longer there. But equally, it is the story of another church that still remains.

Although its precise beginning is opaque it is widely accepted that the first known establishment consisted of Benedictine monks who settled on a promontory of land rising gently above the east bank of the River Ouse just north of Lewes. The area was given the Saxon name of Malling. Some think that the first Benedictine settlement was at a site now called Old Malling a quarter of a mile up river from the present church. However, the circular shape of the graveyard covering one acre, *God's Acre* as the Anglo-Saxons called these early places, is an indication of the antiquity of the present site. A train journey from Haywards Heath to Lewes will best reveal its peaceful beauty. First to be seen is Old Malling with its small cluster of farmhouse and former outbuildings lying close to the river. Then the short square tower of the church can be glimpsed behind the trees. There is just time to notice the Deanery lying beside the church before the train enters the tunnel.

Despite their proximity to the river it is interesting to note that, during the great flood of 2000, Old Malling Farm and the Church and the Deanery all remained above flood level. Sadly, the Victorian cottages around them did not. It seems that the Saxons were wiser in choosing their building sites than we have been since.

In searching for an account of its history, I discovered several learned articles dealing with different aspects, evidence that Malling has continued to interest antiquarians. My concern was to draw the essential elements together to provide an overall account. I gained initially from the research notes of Andrew Breffit, Bill Simmonds and Hugh Court and I am grateful to many other people who have contributed snippets of this and that. The library of the Sussex Archaeological Society proved to be invaluable. Apart from a husband and a son, among the other people whom I pestered were - John Bleach, Jim Bolter, Judy Brent, Susan Crossett, Tom Crossett, Dick Field and Christopher Whittick - my thanks to one and all. It has taken some time to sift, but out of these collections comes a story that, at the very least, has fascinated me.

But one of the difficulties of writing a history is the realisation that there are still so many unanswered questions. I would like to know why the dedication was made to St. Michael, for example. I hope such answers and new insights will not come just as soon as the ink is dry! Nevertheless, my hope is that Malling will continue to attract interest and thus, perhaps, reveal more of its secrets.

Sue Ladipo
Malling Vicarage

January 2002

Note to the Reprint

I was somewhat taken aback and not a little frustrated when the first edition sold out in less than two months. However, while preparing to reprint, I was thrilled to find a photograph of Sarah Warburton. Since she had been an inspiration and the catalyst for all the ensuing work in the graveyard I could hardly reprint this history without including her. This then provided an opportunity to add a few other illustrations.

During the course of the last three years I have been gathering together photographs of past vicars. This collection, still in the Vicarage archive, begins with that of John Warburton. It is not yet complete but eventually it will be deposited at the East Sussex Record Office in Lewes where future historians will be able to have access to it.

S.J.L.

June 2002

The Beginnings

The history of Malling Church reflects the history of the English church and to set it in context we must go back in time a little. Augustine, a Benedictine prior, arrived from Rome on the coast of Kent in 597. He was seeking not only to re-establish the Christian faith in Anglo-Saxon Britain but to make contact with the earlier Romano-British church which had been driven west into the far reaches of Cornwall, Wales and Ireland by the Saxon invaders. Before Augustine died in 605, King Ethelbert of Kent had converted to the Christian faith and the whole of Kent was nominally Christian. But it would take another sixty years before all the kingdoms of Britain had, to some extent, adopted Christianity, and Sussex - land of the South Saxons, was the last to do so.

There is an account by Leland¹ of the granting of land in Malling for a monastery by Caedwalla, who was King of the West Saxons from 685 to 688. He also granted land in Selsey, for the foundation of a monastery there, to Wilfred the Benedictine Archbishop of York. Wilfred ended his missionary sojourn in Sussex in 686 and it is reckoned that the date of grants of land at Malling would have been at about that time. Leland adds that the foundation deed of the monastery was destroyed by fire but gives no dates. The first documentary evidence of a monastic presence in Malling is found in a copy of a charter² thought to date from about 765. It concerns the grants of land in Stanmer, Lindfield and Burleigh and it concludes in Latin with the following words:

'I, Ealdwulf King have signed with my own hand and with authentic agreement this grant for the building of a monastery and the increase of those there serving God and St. Michael, although founded long since in the pious days of old'.

Ealdwulf, the last leader of the South Saxons, is variously referred to as Duke (leader) or King. Significantly, among the other signatories of the charter is that of Offa, King of Mercia, the overlord of Sussex. The charter shows that there were people there already serving God and St. Michael. Was this from the time of Wilfred and Caedwalla eighty years earlier? Or could Ealdwulf have been referring to an even earlier time? I wonder what took place in those *'pious days of old'*?

¹ Collectanea i, 86

² Cartularium Saxonium Vol. 1., no. 197. See also MS Lambeth 1212 p. 382 and British Library ADD MSS 33182 fol. 8 and Sussex Archaeological Collections (SAC) 86 p. 85

Certainly the later members of the collegiate church thought of Ealdwulf as their progenitor. The list of founders and benefactors for whose souls the members of the college were directed to pray daily begins with: *'His most serene highness Ealdwulf, formerly Duke of Southsax and first founder of this college'*.

In 838^{2a} King Egbert granted the manor of Malling together with its monastic settlement to the See of Canterbury. This manor extended in a northeasterly direction from the town of Lewes to the borders of the Kingdom of Kent. There is no further documentary evidence until the Domesday survey of 1086-7. Here we find two separate manors mentioned. Firstly, the manor of Malling owned by the Archbishop in the Rape of Pevensey, covering the land granted by Egbert with four hides in Lewes noted as belonging to the Canons of Malling. Secondly, the manor of Stanmer owned by the Canons of Malling mainly in the Rape of Lewes covering the scattered lands given by Ealdwulf and held, *'as of the Archbishop'*. So within the three centuries from 765 much change had taken place, as the monastic establishment gave way to a collegiate church, run as an outpost of Canterbury, with secular canons overseeing its work. Since there are no records of what happened in Malling we may presume that it would probably have ceased to be a monastery and have become, instead, a collegiate church some time in the first half of the ninth century as it came under the authority and protection of Canterbury.

Early monasteries often became rich from gifts given to them by people seeking to secure eternal security, and wealth in turn often brought spiritual indifference. Such corruption, together with the Viking invasions and ransacking of monasteries meant that by the end of the ninth century English monasticism was dead. Most of the monastic properties that survived passed into the hands of secular canons. Canons, unlike the monks, were ordained clergy attached to a church or cathedral. They were not necessarily subjected to life in common or to celibacy. And like monks they were also liable to degeneration, as time went by, under the influence of wealth, external disorder or the relaxation of religious fervour. Secular canons became unpopular with the people and there were vigorous and successful attempts to revive monasticism again, especially by Archbishop Dunstan (960-988). But soon the country and the church faced another upheaval as Norman invaders arrived on the south coast of England in 1066.

The Medieval Church

The Normans began a prodigious programme of church building. By 1150, Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury had completed a brand new Collegiate Church in Malling to replace the existing building. Of the original records that have come down to our time, are two deeds of Theobald. By the first³ he gives, to the collegiate church, which he had newly erected, on the day of its consecration:

'All the tithes of corn, hay, cheese, wool, pigs, goats and all other titheable articles accruing on his whole Manor of Malling as well as from its appurtenant members'.

The second deed refers not only to canons but also to a Dean. The book of statutes of this new collegiate church is in the Tanner manuscript at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. It describes the collegiate establishment as consisting of five canons; the Archbishop, the Dean, the Precentor, the Chancellor and the Treasurer. Each canon also held office in another church, so that the Dean, for example, was also Rector of Lindfield. Reverend Tony Way in his recently published

^{2a} Cartularium Saxonicum Vol. 1., no. 421

³ SAC V p. 130

account of the clergy of Lindfield includes a biographical sketch of each of the Deans. (*Deans of the College of Canons of South Malling and Rectors of the Parish of All Saints Lindfield SAC 942.25 / MAL*)

There are two wax seals of the college preserved at the Public Record Office in Kew. One, illustrated on the previous page, shows a standing figure, perhaps representing St. Michael. On the reverse is a representation of a church. Much of the wording is missing but it probably read:

Sigillum Commune Ecclesia St. Michaelis de Malling

It is generally accepted that this new medieval church was built on the site where the present church now stands. A map of Lewes drawn by William Figg Jr. in 1824 (*SAC Local Map File no. 5*) shows the shape of the present church together with a thinner outline, what one would take to be the presence of foundations, immediately to the west of it. Together they form the typical shape of a Norman cruciform minster church. However, there are also medieval ruins at Old Malling and it has been suggested that this may have been the site of the Archbishop's residence. Yet others think that this may have been on the site of Malling House, the present Police Headquarters. There is certainly scope for further archaeological investigation.

It is hard to imagine how just how large and important the medieval church of St. Michael must have been, since no sketches or paintings survive. There is, however, a rather sorry description of it after its dissolution, so we know that the church was partly covered on the outside with flint and shingle and rendered on the inside with chalk. Reference is made to the chancel, choir, vestry, and two chapels - one the Lady Chapel, a porch and transepts. The tower, which contained a peal of six bells, had a flat roof with battlements. The roof of the church was covered with lead and with Horsham slabs. The floor, of small Flanders stone, eventually had twenty-nine marble slabs laid in it, '*where in werre Images and Scrypturs of brasse*'. Probably many of these would have been memorials to the different Deans.

On December 29th 1170, Thomas Becket, Theobold's successor and the new collegiate church's second benefactor, was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral. There is an apocryphal story that the three knights who committed the deed rode away to the relative safety of the Archbishop's house in Malling. Throwing their cloaks on the table it then shook as though to protest against their evil deed. The said stone table is displayed in the Anne of Cleves house in Lewes.

Documentary sources^{3a} for what went on in the life of the medieval church are relatively few. There are accounts of disputes with the Cluniac Priory in Lewes over tithes and several references to visits of different Archbishops and their retinues. They would come and stay for several days or weeks at a time as they undertook annual or more frequent perambulations of their manor lands. In 1287, Archbishop Peckam ordained over one hundred candidates at Malling, an indication of its size and status. We know too that the fabric of the building was not taken care of particularly well for by 1440 the church was in danger of collapse.

In 1443, Archbishop Stafford revised the statutes in an attempt to bring greater control and responsibility. He directed that the canons be designated prebendaries of the benefices that they respectively held, and that there should also be three vicars, a penitentiary, and a sacrist, all under the collation of the Archbishop. Since no suitable residences near the church had been provided for the sacrist and vicars they were obliged to live in the homes of their relatives. However, by 1515, houses were built for them, making quite a collection of college buildings by this time.

^{3a} SAC nos. 5, 9, 21, 26, 70 and Sussex Records Collections no. 57 all contain information and further references.

An indication of inherent corruption can be gained from the list of Deans. Although the Dean was supposed to be resident, in later years some of those appointed may not have taken up residency. The title was sometimes given as an honour and source of income. Richard Courtenay was the nephew of the aristocratic Archbishop of Canterbury, William Courtenay, who bequeathed him not only a considerable amount of money but also, *'his best mitre should he become a bishop'*. He was named⁴ as Dean early in his career, but he also held preferments in London, Oxford and Banbury, probably spending most of his time in Oxford. He soon became Bishop of Norwich.

Nicholas Heath relinquished his Deanship of Malling⁵, when he became Bishop of Rochester on the condition that his successor gave him £15 a year for life. This is an interesting insight not only into the value of the position but the belief, in 1539, that the collegiate church might not be dissolved. Heath eventually became the Archbishop of York. He supported Queen Mary and was therefore deprived of his Archbishopric by Queen Elizabeth. Robert Peterson, the last Prior of Lewes, was Heath's successor as Dean. Peterson had been compensated for the dissolution and destruction of the Priory by the gift of various appointments. But six years later he was obliged to surrender yet again. For the collegiate church did not escape and together with its land was surrendered to the crown on March 10th 1545.

Ten years later the first of seventeen protestant martyrs were burned at the stake in Lewes. Many Lewesians were staunchly protestant with little interest in preserving churches that had been associated with catholic practice. A graphic description of how the collegiate church was neglected, plundered and then sold off is provided by John R. Daniel-Tyssen in his article, *'Survey of the College of Malling near Lewes'* (SAC XX1 p. 159). What remained was described as a ruin with cattle coming in and out to find shelter.

The New Church

Things to be seen in the church are indicated by bold type

John Stansfield, a shipping merchant of the Cliffe, purchased the Deanery, church land and the impropriation (the right to appoint a priest) from Sir Thomas Sackville in 1623⁶. Stansfield, a puritan, obtained permission to raise money to build a new church. In 1626, his eight-year-old grandson, John Evelyn, the famous diarist, helped to lay the foundation stone of the present church. Stansfield died in 1627 but not before establishing an annual stipend of £20 a year for, *'the maintenance and livelyhood of a fitt and honest preaching minister'*. Thomas Scotson and Thomas Lucas, puritan neighbours of the late Stansfield then wrote to Archbishop Abbott in 1628 when the church was completed.

'The humble petition of the inhabitants of South Malling sheweth that, whereas it hath pleased the King's most excellent Majesty, to grant his letters patent for a collection towards the re-edifying of the parish church of South Malling within your Grace's peculiar diocese, which is now done upon the ancient foundation in the church-yard, being always hitherto our usual place of burial; notwithstanding we dare not presume to meet there and have divine service and celebration of the Sacrament without your Grace's warrant and allowance'.

The petition was granted and the new church was eventually consecrated on May 23rd 1632. Perhaps all this happened just in time, for Abbott died in 1633 and was replaced by Archbishop Laud, who set about ensuring that puritan lay people would no longer be allowed

⁴ Dictionary of National Biography 1887 Vol. XII p. 340

⁵ Dictionary of National Biography 1891 Vol. XXV p. 345

⁶ SAC 64 p. 78

to buy up advowsons or improprietary rights. The new church was small and simple, built in the spirit of the times. It was a broad single cell with gabled south porch and low west tower. The walls were made of flint with stone quoins within which were plain rectangular mullioned windows.

The large square east window was divided by mullions into twelve panels with small diamond panes of clear glass. Notice one small circular, possibly medieval, window in the south wall. Inside was a double decker pulpit with clerk's desk and sounding board. There were box pews but no communion rails. An oak frame^{6a} for four bells was installed in the tower. Only one bell was hung there but the trusses for that bell were carved and moulded with a degree of ornamentation not seen in any other bell frame in England. The only indications of its medieval predecessor are found in the **rounded arch to the tower**, which is double chamfered on half octagonal responds. And in the **west window of the tower**, which is a broad cusped ogee single light.

Esdras Coxall, the first minister, was probably Stansfield's choice. He left one telling mark at the bottom of the first page of the parish register, where he wrote in Greek, '*For me to live is Christ*'. He was not to know that this particular page would be much sought after in later years for it included the marriage, in 1636, of the puritan John Harvard to Ann Sadler the daughter of the Vicar of Ringmer. Although he died shortly after emigrating to America, Harvard's endowment of books helped towards the founding of the well-known university named after him. **A plaque, placed in the porch in 1984, commemorates the marriage.**

After the death of his wife and several of his young children Coxall left Malling in 1644 and was succeeded by Thomas Stephenson. Stephenson then married the daughter of a wealthy Cliffe merchant Samuel Towers who owned, among other properties, the Anne of Cleves House. Towers died in 1651 and was the first person to be buried in the church vault. This is revealing, for puritans believed it was a spurious catholic tradition to bury the dead in the house of God. Stephenson in turn became the father-in-law of the fourth curate, William Snatt. Snatt was a high churchman known to have persecuted the Quakers of Lewes⁷. Later on in his career he refused to take the oath of allegiance to King William and Queen Mary preferring to relinquish all his appointments. He was briefly imprisoned in London. So within 35 years, which spanned the course of the Civil Wars, the church had experienced dramatic changes in its churchmanship.

During the Restoration Period there was little clerical support and from 1683 Malling was served by the Vicar of Glynde, the two churches now held in plurality. We can presume from this Glynde connection that the church still preferred a more puritan ethos. It would be another 170 years before Malling again had a minister of its own.

The Eighteenth Century

Archbishop Wake's visitation of 1717 records that Glynde and South Malling were still in plurality. Glynde had 22 families including one minister, one non juror, one anabaptist, and one presbyterian. South Malling had 22 families including two farmers who were dissenters. The Vicar lived in Glynde and held one service each Sunday in each church. The sacrament was administered four times a year with about 60 communicants in Glynde and about 45 in Malling. Thomas Davies was Vicar of Glynde and Curate of Malling from 1751-1760 and is known to have supported the Act of Enclosure of the Broyle land in Ringmer which Serjeant William Kempe, the eventual owner of the Deanery and patron of Malling Church, famously

^{6a} SAC 84 p.52

⁷ SAC 16 p.88 and Dictionary of National Biography 1898 Vol. LIII p. 204

opposed. The Kempe family had bought the Deanery and its land together with the impropriation from the Evelyn family in 1648 and it stayed in their possession until 1826.

Perhaps as result of the conflict between patron and curate the connection with Glynde ceased after the tenure of Davies. A succession of clergy from other parishes added the curacy of South Malling to their livings. This was a time of relative difficulty for some clergy and the extra income derived from multiple responsibilities was one way of coping, but how seriously they took their several charges is uncertain. Archbishop Secker's visitation record of 1763^{8a} deemed the then curate as:

'A clergyman's son...ignorant, blundering, careless'.

However, some clergy were far from impoverished. Arthur Iredell⁹ was the son of a wealthy Bristol merchant. In 1795, he became heir to his uncle's Caribbean estates and spent part of his time there, allowing other clergy to perform his pastoral duties in Malling.

He was co-founder and first grandmaster of the South Saxon Lodge in Lewes. He died in Jamaica in 1804 of a fever before he had completed his responsibility as executor to Serjeant William Kempe.

Dr Richard Russell, a local doctor, had married the granddaughter of the first William Kempe of Malling Deanery and in time inherited the property and its rights. He became famous for his seawater remedies and in this way was credited with putting Brighton on the map. He died in 1759 and was buried in the church vault. **His memorial plaque, was formerly next to the east window, but is now on the north wall over the site of the Russell vault.** It includes a quotation in Greek from Iphigenia in Tauris by Euripides. When translated it reads: *'The sea washes away the ills of men'*. This same quotation had appeared on the title page of the dissertation that had brought him fame: *De tabe glandulari sive de usu aquae marinae in morbis glandularum* (The use of seawater in the diseases of the glands), which was published in 1750.

His eldest son, the aforementioned Serjeant Kempe, became heir to the Deanery on his father's death, choosing to assume his mother's maiden name of Kempe. The account he wrote of the history of the Deanery is preserved in a manuscript in the Sussex Archaeological Society Library¹⁰. He died in 1797 leaving four young children all born to him late in life from his third wife. Consequently it took many years before the property, which was held in trust until the children reached maturity, could be sold. In the meantime the patronage of the church passed to the crown. The painting below shows the church situated directly within the Deanery grounds, with no churchyard wall or high hedges to separate them. It appears more like a private chapel.

The Nineteenth Century

Although Charles Harison was also Vicar of Alfriston he chose to live in Lewes, most probably at the Deanery. During his tenure it was said, on account of the church's isolated position, that in bad weather only about half a dozen people would be present in the church on Sunday morning. And no doubt the long period of plurality and isolation had done little for its fortune.

Sir Stephen Glynne in his perambulations of Sussex churches described Malling¹¹ in February 1826 as, *'... a small poor church standing in the grounds of a large house. It seems to be only a*

^{8a} Speculum of Archbishop Secker, Church of England Record Society 2 p. 227

⁹ The Gentleman's Magazine 1805

¹⁰ Woollgar's Spicilegia, Vol. 2 f. 143

¹¹ Sussex Notes and Queries 16 p. 100

chapel or at least a very small parish, there being scarcely one grave in the churchyard'. This is a little misleading for many graves would have been unmarked. There would also have been at least thirty stone tombs and headstones at that time, mainly within a walled enclosure immediately to the west of the church. Many are carved with great skill; the **earliest (grave 67) is dated 1609**.

The Deanery and the impropriation were bought by Henry Campion of Danny in 1832. From now on the curates and subsequent vicars were licensed only to Malling and had charge of no other congregation. In 1836, it fell to Henry Watkins, related by marriage to the patron, to perform a very memorable funeral. For that year the only avalanche ever recorded in England took place in Lewes on December 27th. The fall of snow buried the Poor House in South Street and, with the exception of one child, all the occupants died. Seven of these victims were buried in Malling churchyard in an unmarked communal grave. A public subscription raised money for **a marble memorial tablet on the north wall**, which was placed, *'nearly opposite the site of the grave'*. Watkins died in office in his thirties, as had Harison, and was succeeded by his brother-in-law William Courthope.

William had been a student at Oxford with John Ryle, who was later to become the first Bishop of Liverpool. Their friendship was further strengthened when he married John Ryle's sister Caroline. But tragedy struck a third time when he also died in office in his thirties and, as with Harison and Watkins before him, was buried in the vault. Shortly after this the vault was sealed.

In 1846, the peculiar jurisdictions of Canterbury within the County of Sussex were abolished and South Malling became part of the Lewes Archdeaconry in the Diocese of Chichester. Meanwhile, the patronage of the church passed, through marriage, from the Campion to the Courthope family.

They chose to appoint John Warburton to the curacy of Malling in 1851. He and his wife Sarah had served as pioneering missionaries with the Church Missionary Society in Sierra Leone from 1827-1850. Sarah was first married in 1827 at the age of 36 to Thomas Heighway. They set sail for Freetown a month after the wedding. Many early pioneer missionaries had been influenced by the abolitionists and so it was to Sierra Leone, the land of freedom for Africans returning from America, that they went to serve. Sarah was widowed within thirty days of their arrival. Thomas, like so many others in those early days, had rapidly succumbed to the tropical conditions. In 1830, Sarah married John Warburton, a fellow missionary; he was 25 and she was 39. Sarah, obviously a woman of robust health, then gave birth, in her forties, to three sons. After serving for twenty-three years in Africa, they returned to England and came to Malling. John then was appointed as the first Vicar of Malling during the course of his tenure. He was probably the first clergyman to live at the 'Old Vicarage', which was formerly called the Deanery Garden Cottage.

Meanwhile the Courthope family suffered another tragedy when William's widow Caroline died in childbirth shortly after remarrying. The family then sold the Deanery to Edmund Currey in 1859 but chose to retain the advowson until 1908.

John Warburton served the church for twenty-one years. Two years before he retired Sarah died, after a long and remarkable life, at the age of 78. **Her lovely and very telling memorial is on the north wall**. In the photograph below Sarah would have been, despite her youthful appearance, 70 years old. It was possibly taken to celebrate her birthday.

Considerable change took place in 1874 as the box pews; gallery and organ were removed. The original windows were replaced by ones of lancet or of cusped lancet form. **Memorials**^{11a}

^{11a} Kelly's Postal Directory of Sussex 1874 and 1886

in stained glass were gradually added to these new windows, beginning with the east window given by the patron, George Campion Courthope, in memory of his brother, the former curate William Courthope, and his wife Caroline. Courthope's brother-in-law John Ryle, a well-known evangelical, and by this time the Bishop of Liverpool, gave a memorial window in honour of his sister, Mary Ann Ryle. Yet another of his sisters, Susan Daniel, had a window given in her memory by her husband. These family connections indicate that the spiritual emphasis would have been of an evangelical persuasion from about 1836 to the beginning of the next century.

The Twentieth Century

The patron of a church can influence its spiritual direction to a considerable extent. In 1926, the patronage passed from individual ownership to that of The Martyrs Memorial and Church of England Trust, which since 1952 has been incorporated into The Church Pastoral Aid Society. This is a patronage that favours a low church tradition. The owners of the Deanery had now ceased to have any official influence on the church. However, when Sir Frank Sanderson bought the Deanery in 1924, not only did he provide the church with a hall on Malling Hill, but also, in 1936, provided funds for the erection of a vestry on the north side of the church to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of King George V.

A new missionary connection had begun in 1908 when Robert Marriot a former CMS missionary in Bengal arrived. He stayed for twenty-six years, the longest tenure so far. **The Marriots installed the oak reredos in memory of their respective mothers.** The Tercentenary was commemorated in 1932 by a parish mission and by the establishment of a fund to raise money for a tubular peal of bells to replace the single bell of 1825. The missionary connection continued with John Goodchild 1935-1958 who had been a CMS missionary in India, and with William Simmonds 1967-1979 who had served with the China Inland Mission.

The development of the Malling Estate, combined with the zeal of the charismatic movement in Britain in the latter half of the century and particularly during the tenure of Malcolm Colmer, meant that church membership increased. Plans were made to enlarge the capacity of the church. However, unable to get permission to expand the building or to build in the churchyard, the architect decided that the only way to increase capacity would be to erect a balcony at the east end. This required a complete reordering of the interior and placing the altar at the west end.

Meanwhile, a new Vicarage was built adjacent to the former Vicarage and the latter then sold. Anthony Hindley inherited the plans for reordering the church. The pews and choir stalls were removed, and, by raising money from the sale of the Church Hall, the church turned to face west in 1989. During this reconstruction work the brick vaults under the church floor were revealed and the lead coffins of Dr Richard Russell and others discovered.

The church had lost its church hall, although its distance from the church had limited its use, but it had gained a more flexible space. However, numbers gradually fell and the balcony, scheduled for the second stage of the work, was not built. In 1999, St. Michael's welcomed its first African priest, Yemi Ladipo, a Canon of Jos Cathedral, Nigeria. Missionary activity turned full circle. Finding that the altar was now so close to the main door of the church, making it intimidating for newcomers and difficult for latecomers, a decision was made in 2000 to return the altar to the east end.

To mark the millennium it was decided to tackle the problem of the overgrown, unmanageable graveyard. A flint stone wall had been built around the churchyard in the first half of the nineteenth century following its circular boundary and this was in need of repair. The

graveyard had filled with Victorian memorials, including vulnerable upright crosses and uninscribed kerbstones that hampered its maintenance. The graveyard project, which is still ongoing, has involved a cross section of the community. In the course of the work, mullions from the original windows were found. **They are displayed outside the back door of the church.** Today the outline of the original east window can still be seen from the outside, **notice where two small stiff-leaf medieval capitals have been reset at its upper corners.**

On January 1st 2001 the church celebrated the publication of *'The Memorial Inscriptions of South Malling Church'*. This was an unexpected offshoot of the millennial commitment to the graveyard. It contains not only all the existing memorials but also an account, gleaned from old records, of some of the memorials that are no longer there. A list of the many people involved in the effort is included. It has been deposited at the East Sussex Record Office (PAR 419 7/1/4). **A copy is also kept in the church.**

How much change there has been since its ancient foundation: first a monastery and then a collegiate church, rebuilt in 1150 only to be dissolved. Rising again as a small puritan place of worship and then languishing in plurality. Revitalised by the fervour of the Victorians and 'improved' under the influence of the Gothic Revival. Since then it has been modernised and made more flexible. And yet, despite changing fortune, fluctuating fashion and differing religious emphases it still survives to bear witness to the unchanging nature of Christ's redeeming love. Such survival is due, in part, to the unrecorded and yet faithful dedication of its lay members over many years.

Long may it continue

Deans of the Collegiate Church¹²

- c. 1150 Eilafe
- c. 1185 Henry de Cruce
- c. 1200 William de Bosco
- c. 1261 Nicholas de Wich
- c. 1270 William de Wood
- c. 1275 - 1293 Reginald de Gressenhale
- 1293 - 1293 John de Berewyk appointed and exchanged
- 1293 - 1293 Henry de Northwood appointed and exchanged
- 1293 - 1300 Robert de Ros
- 1300 - 1302 Martin de Hampton
- 1302 - 1326 William de Swanton
- 1327 - 1330 Nicholas de Wardedieu
- 1330 - 1337 Roger de Stratton
- ...1337 - 1357 John de Aylesbury
- 1357 - 1371 John de Echingham
- 1371 - 1371 John Patteney appointed and exchanged
- 1371 - 1371 Richard de Apulderham appointed and exchanged
- 1371 - 1375 Thomas Ocle
- 1375 - 1380 Giles de Wyngremouth
- 1380 - 1385 Adam de Wykemer
- 1386 - 1390 John de Kirkeby
- 1390 - 1390 Robert Copyn appointed and exchanged

¹² Victoria County History of Sussex Vol. 2 p. 118 and SAC XVI p. 79 and Revd. T. W. Horsfield, History and Antiquities of Lewes Vol. II pps. 167-8 and Close Rolls 19 Edw 11 m. 5 and Revd. T. Way Deans of the College of Canons South Malling SAC 942.25 / MAL

1390 - 1394 Geoffrey Chauntrell
1394 - 1396 Richard Courtenay
1396 - 1399 Richard Felde
1399 - 1406 Henry Winchester
1406 - 1438 William Piers
1441 - 1453 John Druell
...1453 - 1458 John Urry/Hyrry
1458 - 1473 Thomas Hanwelle
1473 - 1481 Thomas Edmond
1481 - 1515 Thomas Brent
1515 - 1532 Robert Wykes
1532 - 1536 John Piers
1536 - 1537 Thomas Heritage
1537 - 1539 Nicholas Heath
1539 - 1545 Robert Peterson surrendered

Clergy serving St. Michael's Church

Curates:

1629 - 1644 Esdras Coxall
1648 - 1660 Thomas Stephenson
1662 - 1666 Henry Mountague Also Vicar of Glynde
1667 - 1672 William Snatt Also Curate of All Saints, Lewes
1683 - 1720 Alan Carr Also Vicar of Glynde
1720 - 1725 James Barker Also Vicar of Glynde
1725 - 1750 John Hawes Also Vicar of Glynde.
1751 - 1760 Thomas Davies Also Vicar of Glynde.
1760 - 1770 William Hampton Jr. Also Rector of Plumpton
1770 - 1775 Theodore Fletcher Also Curate of Ringmer
1777 - 1778 Mansel Gwynne Also Curate of Ringmer
1779 - 1788 Robert Gerison Also Curate of Ringmer
1788 - 1799 Arthur Iredell and George Chilton Lampton Young
1800 - 1810 James Hutchins Also Rector of Telescombe
1811 - 1818 William Gwynne Also Rector of St. Anne's
1818 - 1821 William Courthope Also Vicar of Southover
1822 - 1832 Charles Harison Also Vicar of Alfriston
1832 - 1836 Thomas Oliver Goodchild
1836 - 1841 Henry Watkins
1842 - 1849 William Courthope
1849 - 1851 Frederick Skene Courtenay Chalmers.
1851 - 1872 John Warburton

Vicars:

1872 - 1874 Richard Burnet
1875 - 1881 Charles Dunlop Smith.
1881 - 1895 Peter Pearson Mason
1896 - 1908 William Marrable
1908 - 1934 Robert Buchanan Marriot
1935 - 1958 John Townshend Goodchild
1958 - 1966 John Robert Aspinall

1967 - 1979 William Hugh Cyril Simmonds

1979 - 1985 Malcolm John Colmer

1986 - 1998 Anthony Talbot Hindley

1999 - 2002 Adeyemi Olalekan Ladipo