

St Bartholomew's Church, Yeovilton

St Bartholomew's the parish church of Yeovilton has enjoyed a close friendship with RNAS Yeovilton (HMS Heron) since 1940 when Heron was first commissioned.

Like many ancient buildings the church has its roots deep in history but by 1988 much of its structure was deemed unsafe therefore it became redundant.

The idea had been considered many times to use St Bartholomew's as the Anglican Church for RNAS Yeovilton, so at this point the Royal Navy seized the chance and bought the 'job lot' for £1.

This brought about a series of national and international appeals to restore the church to its former glory, this happened under the newly formed Trustees. An order in Council signed by the Prince of Wales and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother formally sealed this process.

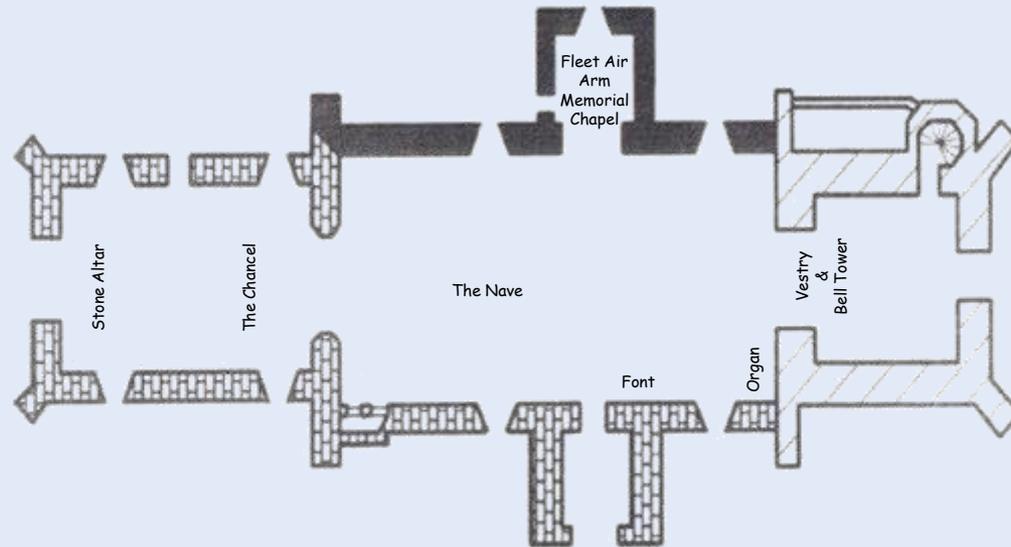
The church then passed from the local Diocese Of Bath & Wells to assume the mantle of the Fleet Air Arm Memorial Chapel, in effect a private chapel housing the Memorial Record Book of the Fleet Air Arm and becoming a focal point for those lost in conflict.

On November 11th 1993 after much restoration the dedication ceremony took place.

St Bart's as it has become affectionately known as:

Is a place of focus for the bereaved, a place to celebrate baptisms, weddings and funeral for those with a connection to the Fleet Air Arm.

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North side of the church

Graphic layout: Adapted from St Bartholomew's Church information.

Entrance to the church is via the wooden gates and in through the north door.



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Entering through the porch gates which were a donation and were made at HMS Daedalus.

On each of the porch gates you will find the emblem of the Fleet Air Arm.



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Directly opposite the north door and maybe one of the first sights that may catch your eye as you enter, is the south vestry, now converted into the Fleet Air Arm Memorial Chapel.

The chapel is enclosed within an oak and glass screen presented by the New Zealand Fleet Air Arm Association, their 'engraved' crest is just about visible at the top.

On September 4th 2002 the FAA Association's old colour was laid up in the memorial chapel, on the opposite side is the White Ensign.

The stained glass window was given by HMS Daedalus commemorating the dedication of the church, it includes crests of RNAS in commission at the time.

Reading from top left you have:

Gannet
Osprey
Heron
Seahawk
Daedalus

and the last one says:
TO
COMMEMORATE
THE DEDICATION OF
ST: BARTHOLOMEW'S
YEOVILTON
AS THE
FLEET AIR ARM
MEMORIAL CHURCH
1993





Also housed within the FAA Memorial Chapel you will find the Roll of Honour which lists all those who have died serving in or with the Fleet Air Arm.

The Roll of Honour
was dedicated on the 10th November 1995.

There are a number of dedication plaques throughout the church, here are three of them



Recipients of the Victoria Cross during the First & Second World Wars

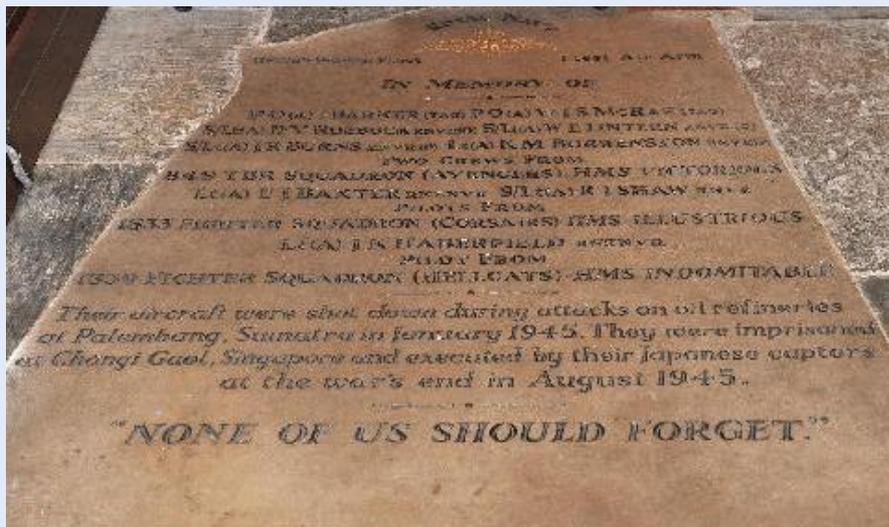
Sarawak 1964-1968



Basra, May 2006

There is also a plaque remembering some of those from the Falklands War.

There is a memorial stone dedicated to the
'Palembang Nine,'
 this is situated at the rear of the Nave
 just in front of the organ



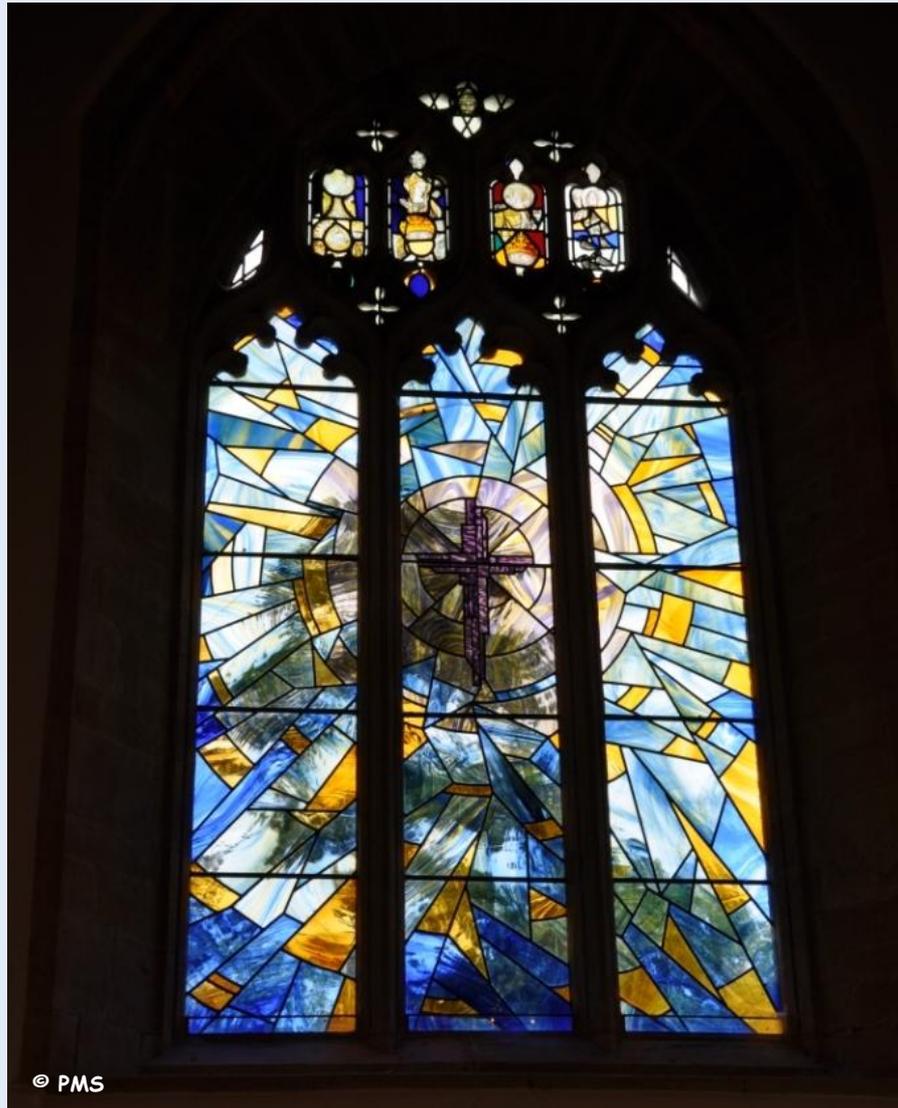
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Lieutenant J. K. Haberfield, RNZNVR, Lieutenant (A) E. J. Baxter, RNZNVR, were shot down on 26 January 1945 during an attack on the oil refineries at Palembang, Sumatra. They were captured by the Japanese and, in February 1945, sent to Singapore where they were placed in Outram Road Gaol. In 1945 they were executed, together with seven other Fleet Air Arm pilots.

In 1983 researchers found that the seven from the Fleet Air Arm Palembang air strike parachuted to safety only to be executed after being prisoners for some time by the Japanese on Changi Beach two days after the ceasefire 1945.

Their names are listed below.

- Petty Officer J S McRae**
Crew from 849 TBR Squadron (HMS Victorious)
- Petty Officer Ivor Barker**
Crew from 849 TBR Squadron (HMS Victorious)
- S/Lt. William Edwin Lintern**
Crew from 849 TBR Squadron (HMS Victorious)
- S/Lt. John Robert Burns**
Crew from 849 TBR Squadron (HMS Victorious)
- S/Lt. Reginald James Shaw**
Pilot from 1833 Fighter Squadron (HMS Illustrious)
- S/Lt. Donald V Roebuck**
Crew from 849 TBR Squadron (HMS Victorious)
- Lt. Kenneth Morgan Burrenston**
Crew from 849 TBR Squadron (HMS Victorious)
- Lt. Evan John Baxter (RNZNVR)**
Pilot from 1833 Fighter Squadron (HMS Illustrious)
- Lt. John Haberfield (RNZNVR)**
Pilot from 1839 Fighter Squadron (HMS Indomitable)



To celebrate the Millennium, a window of 'Resurrection Light' was installed. Funds were raised by donation from many sources including individuals and various Associations who have links with St Bartholomew's.



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At the front of the bell ringing platform is a screen bearing two glass engravings, HMS Victorious Reunion (1941-1945) Reunion Association.

The Telegraphists and Air Gunners Association, presented the other one.



The 15th century font was relined courtesy of the Eastbourne Fleet Air Arm Association.

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Also presented through generous donations were:

The Chandeliers:

The wooden gates leading into the church:

The Stone Cross at the top of the porch was given by the restoration builder.

Sanctuary lamp and baptismal ewer were presented to the church by former members of 809 and 835 NAS, respectively.



All the
'Kneelers'
were embroidered by volunteers,
these are just two of the four designs.

© PMS



Between 1940-1942 there were a number of victims as a result of air accidents, they are buried in the churchyard and are designated War Graves.

© PMS



We are now looking at the south side of the church.

It was on the southern boundary that the Naval Cemetery was opened in 1942.

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Entrance to the RN Cemetery.

© PMS



Where all Naval Graves are well looked after.



© PMS

In 2001 the MOD purchased an extension to the Naval Cemetery.



© PMS

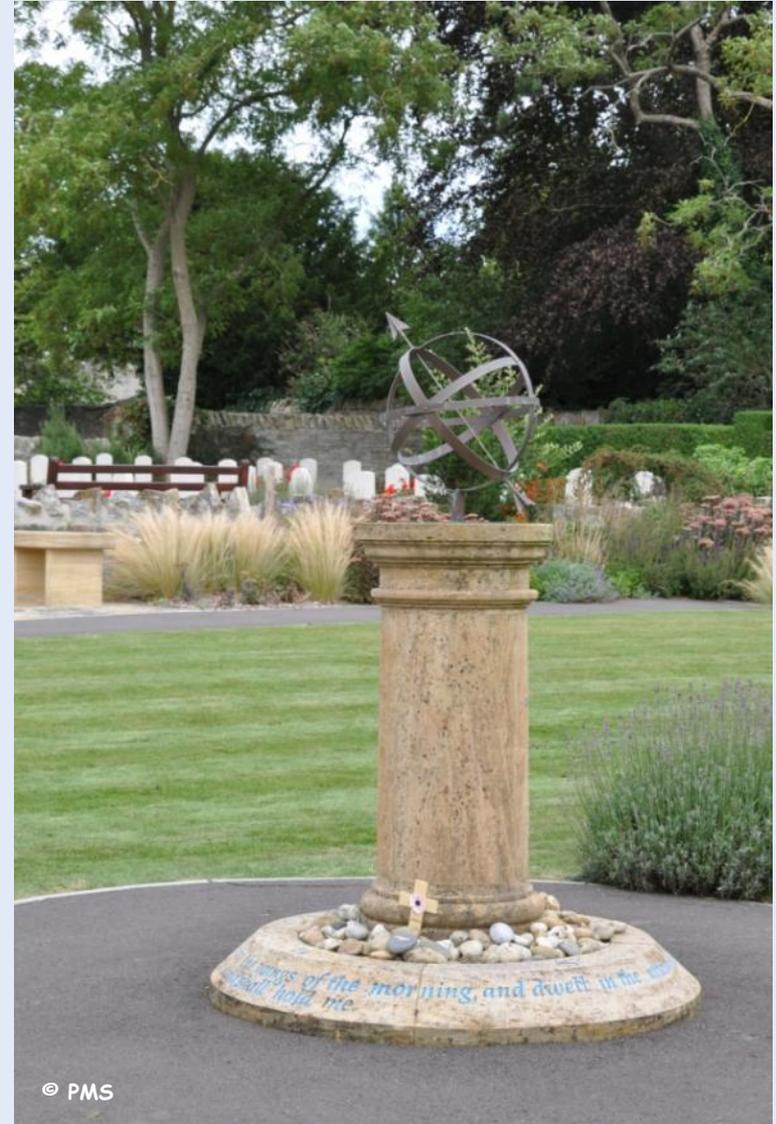
It was landscaped with a donation from a very generous benefactor.

The Stone Wayside Shrine



Added in 2002
by
private
donations.

Armillary Sphere



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St Bartholomew's Church is well maintained both inside and out.
To quote from their own literature: 'It's a gem of a place.'



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