



FOST news

Friends of St Thomas' Church Northlew

St Thomas': past, present, future

DEVON
HISTORIC
CHURCHES



St Thomas of Canterbury Church, Northlew

Open day

Saturday 13 September 10:00 – 16:00

St Thomas': past, present, future

Find out more about our Parish church and its activities while supporting the work of Devon Historic Churches Trust

Teas, coffees and light refreshments in the church

Devon's churches have been a focal part of life in the county for centuries - a spiritual and physical focus for the communities they serve. They are an important part of the landscape and of our natural and built heritage. With your help we can ensure that they remain so.

DEVON HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST
Charity Registration Number 1189807

Come and join us for our Open Day on Saturday 13 September celebrating church activities past, present and future. All proceeds will be donated to the Devon Historic Churches Trust. And the good news is that half the money raised is returned to the church to help maintain our beautiful building.

Displays and activities will include a taste of 'citizen science' investigating the wildlife in the churchyard. We'll be looking back at past events - weddings, baptisms and festivals - the role of the PCC and FOST (Who's who), the history of St Thomas with a display about Becket - and much more. More details on facebook.

and in other news...

- *Away in a manger...* on Saturday 13 December will feature a display of nativity sets from around the world with craft activities for children. The traditional Nine Lessons and Carols service is the following day.
- We've joined *Eco Church*, a programme open to churches of all denominations to help them take practical action to care for the environment. Northlew Church is aiming for a bronze award - find out more at the Open Day.
- Jeremy Chadburn, Conservation Architect, is overseeing the much needed repairs to the church including the gutters, tower and roof. He has submitted the plans to Exeter Diocese for permission. The start of a big project!

Supporting FOST

FOST news is an occasional newsletter with information about our church building and fund raising events. If you would prefer an electronic copy, just let us have your email address.

You can support the Friends' work by taking part in fund raising events but if you would like to get more actively involved and/or become a member, please contact Jackie Ellis jackie.ann.ellis@btinternet.com 01837 658750 .

Secure donations can be made using our QR code - and you can Gift Aid your contribution at the same time.



FOST is a Registered Charity No 1070123

FOST facts

The Bible owes its name to papyrus. The Greeks called papyrus rolls 'biblia' after Phoenicia's seaport Byblos, a major exporter of papyrus. In time the word came to mean 'book' and eventually 'the Book' - the Bible.

Coming up

Sunday services are held at 9:30 most weeks. Communion is the second Sunday of the month and on all fifth Sundays we are invited to Hatherleigh Church at 11:00 for a five church service

Saturday 13 September

10:00 - 16:00 Open Day in aid of Devon Historic Churches Trust

Sunday 5 October

Harvest Festival and supper

FOST finds



High up on the windowsill in the Rutleigh Chapel is a Victorian framed print illustrating the Lord's Prayer.

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Spotlight on...

Northlew Parish Church is one of over a hundred churches and priories dedicated to *St Thomas of Canterbury*, including one in Hamburg and several in the USA.

Each year we remember our Patron Saint by re-enacting his murder during the Patronal Festival Service. St Thomas remains close to our hearts.



*A brief history of Thomas Becket**

Saint Thomas à Becket of Canterbury (c. 1119/1120 – December 29, 1170) was an English archbishop and martyr, best known for his conflict with King Henry II and his dramatic murder in Canterbury Cathedral.

Early Life:

- Becket was born in London to a wealthy Norman merchant family.
- Educated in London, Paris, and possibly Italy, he was known for his

intelligence and ambition.

- He entered the service of Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, and later became Archdeacon and a trusted adviser.

Career and Conflict:

- Thomas was appointed Chancellor of England by King Henry II in 1155. He became a close friend and loyal servant of the king.
- In 1162, Henry appointed him Archbishop of Canterbury, expecting Becket to help reduce Church power.
- However, Becket underwent a spiritual transformation and began defending the rights and independence of the Church.
- The two clashed, especially over the Constitutions of Clarendon (1164), which sought to limit ecclesiastical privileges and papal authority.

Exile and Murder:

- Becket fled to France in 1164 after refusing to accept royal control over the Church.
- He spent six years in exile, supported by the Pope and the French monarchy.
- He returned to England in 1170 after a partial reconciliation.
- Soon after, he excommunicated bishops loyal to Henry II.

- Henry, in frustration, reportedly exclaimed, “*Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?*” Four knights took this as an order and murdered Becket in Canterbury Cathedral on December 29, 1170.

Legacy:

- Becket was quickly venerated as a martyr and saint.
- He was Canonised by Pope Alexander III in 1173.
- His shrine in Canterbury became a major pilgrimage site, famously referenced in Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*.
- St Thomas remains a symbol of the struggle between Church and state, and of conscience over political loyalty.

St Thomas at St Thomas’



The processional banner near the altar shows Thomas’ mitre, crossed keys (the keys to Heaven), swords of martyrdom and his coat of arms (three choughs)



Thomas is depicted on our Tudor bench ends. One shows him in his Archbishop’s mitre and another is carved with the cup of martyrdom and his initial T. A mitre also figures on the top of one of the churchwardens’ wands



There is a full length image of Archbishop Thomas in the Pellew stained glass window. He is holding a model of the church building in his hand

Find out more about the life and death of St Thomas at our Open Day on Saturday 13 September.

** with a little help from AI...*