



The name Charminster ('Cerminstre' in the Domesday Book) means 'minster church on the River Cerne'. This church has its origins in Saxon times and since 1075 Charminster has been part of the Diocese of Salisbury, having previously been property of the See of Sherborne. The oldest parts of the church date from the 11th and 12th Centuries, followed by features from C15th and C16th. Further small alterations were carried out in the early C19th, before a major renovation 1895-97.

1. FONT

WATER is blessed and put into the font for baptism. The bowl at the top is **circular**, and the middle part has **8 sides**. The font is often found near the entrance to the church as people being baptised are at the start of their spiritual journey as members of the Christian church. This font is probably of 12th century origin, recut and reshaped in the 15th century.

2. TOWER

Church Bells are up in the tower. **Ten** ropes, one for each bell. It is remarkable for this church to have 10 bells, and even more remarkable that 3 bells were introduced in the 20th century, the latest one in 1988, whereas the oldest bell dates to 1663. Charminster attracts many visiting bell ringers and peal bands. Sir Thomas Trenchard (1460-1550) was responsible for building the tower. He was also one of the builders of Wolfeton House, a beautiful Tudor Manor, about one mile from Charminster.



3. NAVE

The arches are **pointed** with continuous nail-head ornament. All the columns supporting the arches have chevron ornament but the bases of the columns on the south and north sides are different. The south columns arise from square bases, while those on the north side (which are slightly higher) have rounded moulded bases on square sub-bases.

4. CLERESTORY AND CORBELS

The 8 windows in the clerestory are of **different sizes** and ages: Four are from the original church of 11th century and are round headed and did not have glass put into them until 1896; and four are 15th century windows. There are **16** corbels, dating to 15th century, carved with angels, humans and grotesques.

5. SOUTH CHAPEL

There are **2** table tombs of Purbeck marble thought to belong to 16th century Trenchards. In this chapel lie members of the families who owned Wolfeton House, most notably the Trenchards and the Mohuns who were related by marriage. Apart from the carvings with spirals on octagonal columns and other decorations, all the inlaid brass work and shields are blank. In the present day, the spaces are used for displays such as the Nativity at Christmas or flowers especially at Easter and for weddings.

The Piscina is used for '**Holy Washing up**'. It is an arched niche near the altar with a basin and a drain going straight into the ground for rinsing the communion vessels.

6. STAINED GLASS WINDOW

Jesus is the figure in the centre. The glass was given in memory of the Pavey family in 1912.

7. GRACE POLE MEMORIAL

She is kneeling at her prayer desk with cherubs and clouds above. She died in **1638**. Her husband was **William Pole**, and they lived in Devon. She must have been much loved by her father, **Thomas Trenchard**, who gave this memorial. She left no children behind.

8. PULPIT

Wood, and beautifully carved and decorated. The steps make it elevated for the priest/preacher to deliver the sermon (talk, guidance) during the service, so that **the preacher can be seen and heard** easily. The date, 1635, it was made is carved on the inside.

9. CHANCEL ARCH

The head of this arch is **rounded**, and is decorated with **nailhead ornament, the same decoration as in the arches in the nave**. Round arches are usually Norman 11th/12th century, and this fine chancel arch together with the East wall in which it is set, are the only two surviving features from the early Norman church. The stencilled wall paintings are **red/orange** and are thought to represent **pomegranates**, or possibly strawberries. They are originally around **600 years old** and have been restored. Many paintings were found around several walls during the 1890s' restoration; there are still some traces of black letter text, trees, fruits, and the Passion and the Resurrection.

10. CHANCEL

The Altar is the main feature. The chancel was originally the area reserved for the clergy at the east end of the church. At one time the clergy were responsible for maintaining the chancel and the people for maintaining the rest of the church. The altar is a table, the focal point of a church, where the main Christian act of the Eucharist (Holy Communion or Mass) is performed. It is also called "The Lord's Table", "the Holy Table" or "The Communion Table". The cloth on the altar will be White, Purple, Red or Green. The seasons of the church's year are marked by using different colours: White for Christmas, Easter, Trinity, patron saint's day; Purple for Advent (the 4 weeks before Christmas), Lent (the 40 days before Easter); Red for Pentecost also called Whitsun (the coming of the Holy Spirit); Green for all other times (known as Ordinary Time). There is a **wooden cross**, which is the main Christian symbol, on the **window sill** behind the altar.

11. SQUINT

The console, the keyboard part of the **organ** can be seen. This squint, probably 500-600 years old was blocked up when the original chancel was demolished. It was not until the restoration work was done in 19th century that the squint was reopened in 1895-1897. When the organ was repositioned great care was taken for **the Organist** to have a direct view to the Priest at the Altar so he/she can play at the correct time.

12. NORTH AISLE

This is a space for church meetings, for limited refreshments, an overflow if the church is full, space for a choir and storage in cupboards. There is a play area for small children. The long wooden structure is a 'servery' with sinks for washing up. There is also a toilet behind the organ loft.

13. ORGAN

X should be at the organ pipes in a handsome wooden case. The longest pipes make the lowest sounds. In this church the console is attached to the pipes through a large pipe under the floor. **(c) The organ is raised to protect the organ from being flooded** which has happened a few times during this church's long history. Most recently, the organ was damaged in the flooding of the church in 2000 and was then raised 1/2m off the floor, and escaped any further damage during the flooding in 2014. Look for the 'tideline' on the ends of the pews.



14. KNEELERS

Blue is the main colour of the kneelers which were embroidered by the parishioners for the Millennium. There are many different designs which were personally chosen by the embroiderers.

In the Church, **blue has become the traditional colour of the Virgin Mary, to whom this church is dedicated**. Blue, the colour of the sky, symbolizes Heaven and heavenly love. It is the colour of truth. In painting, both Christ and the Virgin Mary wear mantles of blue.

How did your monogram turn out?

