

Church of St John, Milborne Port, Somerset.

Clockwise from top left, this page -



1. Central tower and south 'transept' from the SE. Note the characteristic 'narrower' transept to the tower (as at Wimborne Minster, Breamore, and at Sherborne Abbey). The S transept was heavily restored in 1843.

2. South wall of chancel showing surviving pilaster strips and arcading. There are similar remains within the vestry on the corresponding north wall exterior.

3. North tower arch giving access to transept, viewed from inside crossing. Much of the stonework of the crossing has suffered from re-pointing carried out in a poor and unsympathetic manner.

4. General view of church from the west, showing rebuilt Victorian nave of 1867-9 and the Anglo-Saxon central tower with 15th century upper belfry stage. Until the demolition of the nave there remained on the west front vestiges of triangular headed archways on either side of the inserted Perpendicular window. H.Taylor records the existence of a photograph published by A.Reynolds in 1893. Reynolds was responsible for taking down the old west front.



A note about the photos on page 2. The capitals are finely carved in stone (mainly of foliage). But whereas those belonging to the western nave arch of of stone, the others are either executed in stone or in plaster. In the south transept it can be seen how the stone has been finished to receive the plaster since on some faces only traces of plaster remain, the carved plaster area having been removed.



Milborne Port church. Capitals in tower crossing.

From top right, clockwise, this page -

Capitals, tower crossing;

First photo (with blue border) is of the SW corner, then moving anti-clockwise around the crossing, thus featuring all eight capitals in strict order (not numbered).



Milborne Port church; chancel.

This page from top left; in clockwise order.

5. South wall, blocked Saxon window with motifs in similar manner to crossing capitals, viewed internally (partly obstructed by heater!).
6. North wall, blocked Saxon window (note non-radial voussoirs), this with 'mature' Continental Romanesque cushion capital (poorly placed heaters intrude again in this picture).
7. A reminder of how the disturbed work appears on the exterior of the south wall (see H.Taylor, 'Anglo-Saxon Architecture' Vol. I, page 427, for explanation).
8. Closer detail of decorated capital seen in picture 1.



Milborne Port church; crossing archway bases.

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Bases of archways to crossing; although they are perhaps similar there are differences, the nave and chancel arch bases are distinctively different, but both transept archway bases are an identical pair.

- 9. The south base of the nave archway, note the distinctive web, or fillet, to the bulbous top and which is seated upon a square and plain base and which in turn sits atop a two stage stepped, chamfered and undercut base.
- 10. The north east base of the chancel arch, note the distinct difference to that of the nave. There are 3 stages, the lower two are of circular plan and are decreasing and chamfered, the uppermost stage are again decreasing cylindrical but rounded off at the top.
- 11. The north west base which belongs to the north transept archway. Here we have the stepped, chamfered and undercut two tier base as the nave archway, the third and uppermost tier here are the same square plan to match those below but with a generously rounded upper face.



Nikon

Milborne Port church; late Anglo-Saxon south doorway to nave.

This page from top left; in clockwise order.



This doorway shows the dominating influence of Continental Romanesque techniques and style in the two decades before the Conquest. Note however the typically Anglo-Saxon form of the foliate capital in picture 14.

12. A general view of this fine late Anglo-Saxon doorway set in protruding stonework. The outer order in darker stone appears to date to the Victorian restoration of 1867-9 when most of the nave was destroyed.

13. The arch of this doorway which shows the receding orders.

14. A detail of the westernmost capitals and orders.



Milborne Port church; overview.

15. A very good watercolour of the church from the SW, by W.H. Turner and dating to 1844. This is some 20 years before the "restoration" when the north transept was rebuilt and the nave in greater part demolished and rebuilt lengthened by some 28 feet (8.5 metres) and with a north aisle. Note the fine Anglo-Saxon south doorway which was retained but partially restored. The spiral staircase to the tower is clearly seen. It seems there is no trace in this painting of the pre-conquest arcading on the old west front, except maybe the strong change in profile mid way up the wall and it is possible this was either a 'capping' over the arcading, or from whence the arcade sprung.

