

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, NYNEHEAD

Origin of the name Nynehead: The name Nynehead is unique as it is the only place with this name in the world. Documentary evidence of human settlement can be traced back to Saxon times. The first date Nynehead was mentioned was in 737AD when the Manor was granted to the Bishop of Winchester. In A.D 890 land was granted to a Wulfhere Gidding, at a yearly rent of 20 shillings "*on condition that the tenant shall be a follower of the Lord of the church*". The actual name Nynehead is derived from the area of the Parish at that time which is nine hides i.e. Nigonhidon (AD 897) which then gradually changed over the years e.g. Nichehede (1086); Neghenhude (1327); Nyenhide (1410; finally Nynehead in the 19th century.. The name Nynehead is of Anglo-Saxon origin, in Thomas Gerard's book '*Particular Description of the County of Somerset*' in 1633 he said of the name 'Whose very name shewes what quantity of grownd is comprized'. A hide is a unit of land measurement thought to equal 120 modern acres which equates to about 1000 acres. The village was formally called Nichehede. In 1091 the Manor and the church were granted to the Fleury family and the name then changed to Nynehead Florey which referred to the area around the church and Court and East Nynehead was Nynehead Monks.

Early Church: The village church is situated towards the western end of the five hamlets of Nynehead and overlooks the school and the lower end of the village. It stands on fairly high ground and from the church tower, one has a panoramic view of the Blackdown Hills to the south and the Brendon and Quantock Hills to the north. It is probable that there was a simple church on this site in A.D 890 because the condition of renting the manor was that the tenant should follow and worship the Lord. A church at Nynehead is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1068. Then by a charter dated 1091, William, Count of Mortain, founder of the Montacute Priory, granted to the monks of Montacute the manor and church. The Montacute Priory was founded by William, Count of Mortain, in about 1100AD. It was the only Cluniac Order in the county, an order which was developed from Cluny in Burgundy. In 1292 the rectorial tithe was worth six and a half marks. A mark was a bar of silver, in weight about half a pound. The tithe at this time went to the Taunton Priory as one of the monks would have served as the parish priest.

The canons and monks had beards, their habit was a black cassock over which was a white rochet, with a black cloak and hood and a cap on the head. As is the case with most church buildings, various alterations and additions have been made over a period of time.

After the Reformation the tithe reverted to the Crown. In 1554 Queen Mary presented a vicar to the parish. Then Queen Elizabeth 1st presented three vicars in 1564, 1567 and 1570. James 1st presented one vicar in 1618. Charles 1st presented the vicar in 1638. Charles 2nd presented 2 vicars; William 3rd ; George 1st ; George 2nd ; George 3rd all presented vicars to Nynehead. The last vicar to be presented by the Crown was Dr Thomas Bovet in 1786; after this the patronage came into the possession of the Sanford family until the late 20th century. The Sanford family lived in Nynehead Court between 1590 and 1919.

The value of the living in 1695 was £8 7s 11d but by 1788 this had risen to £70. In 1923 the Vicarial tithe was £225 per year plus residence and eleven and a half acres of glebe (land for the vicar to farm).

In the building of churches many pieces of the older buildings were reused. In the early 19th century a carved stone head was found while the restoration of the church was in progress. This would indicate that the present day church was built from the remains of a former church. Also older pieces of the original church appear in other places e.g. the piscina in the sanctuary.

Churchyard

The driveway up to the church is lined with large sweet chestnut trees (probably planted in the mid 19th century) and in the spring the churchyard is covered with snowdrops. These are followed by a yellow carpet of primroses, which cover the ground between the gravestones, some of which date back to the 16th century. Before the advent of tombstones, the ground was used repeatedly and many remains have been found when clearing drains etc near to the church walls. When one paid a fee to have a tombstone erected in order to mark a grave, one did not purchase the freehold, one merely compensated the vicar for the loss of grass, the keep for his sheep. The Churchyard is the Vicar's freehold and it is still within the law for the Vicar to keep sheep in the churchyard or to give permission for sheep to graze there, but not horses or cows. However, in modern times the care of the churchyard is generally vested in the Parochial Church Council who is responsible for the upkeep.

Most of the inhabitants of the village have obviously been buried in the churchyard but there is one interesting document in the Somerset Record Office which is a warrant for the burial of a criminal at the crossroads: owing to his crime he had lost the right to be buried in the churchyard. The document states: *"The above certificate being signed I do according to my office condemn ye corps of ye felon to be buried at a cross roads, a stake struck through him and so forth in terorem."*

Your humble servant John Clarke

Jan 8th 1734

The stake was driven through his body to pin him to the spot so that he could not then haunt the neighbourhood.

Amongst the gravestones in the churchyard is a listed monument to the Chorley family. In a photograph of the church in about 1880/90 this tomb had railings around it. The monument is mid-nineteenth century and is inscribed on the south side John Chorley (1876) and his wife Mary (1857) while the inscription on the north side is to their son, John, who predeceased them in 1847.

The Bee Bowls: On the brick wall between the church and Nynehead Court there are three curved structures which were bee bowls and were originally open at the back but are now blocked off with brick. These bowls had hives inside them and the wax was used for the altar candles.

The Churchyard Cross: The remains of the 15th Century Ham Stone churchyard cross is on the north side of the church. The first churchyard cross was erected to mark the spot on which the church was to be built. There would have been an earlier cross but the base of the present remains of the cross contain shields and monuments in memory of the Jacobs, Ludlow, Bailey, Woodley, Chorley and Honniball families. In Charles Pooley's book 'An Historical and descriptive account of the Old Stone Crosses of Somerset' published in 1877 he stated :- *"Only two parts are left of this once beautiful churchyard Cross, - the base, which has a deep drip and a slayed set-off and the square ornamental socket, which is set on a square plinth worked by chamfers from an octagonal bed. Each of the four sides is decorated with a shield,*

sculptured in relief in an oblong sunk panel, having a small recessed panel on each side. I have met with no Cross exactly similar to this. While the octagonal base is late 14th Century, the socket exhibits characteristics of the late 15th century.”

Dole Table: Amongst the gravestones there is the ancient village dole table of red sandstone – 16th or 17th century. The Parish Charities were given out from this stone table to recipients. These Dole tables are very rare in churchyards. In the Churchwardens Accounts of 1668 to 1685 there are many references to charitable giving. Poor travellers were relieved, having passes or certificates, “*undone by fire*” or “*ruinated,*” and seamen “*cast away*” or “*maimed*” obtained relief e.g, in 1673 it states in the accounts “*pd to poore travellers viz a man, his wife and family who had sustaynd great losses att Sea by certificate appeareth 2s 0d; pd a poore crippled traviler y had a passé 1s – 0d; pd 3 men and their families that lost their ship and goods att sea 1s 6d; pd poore travailers that had a pass 6d.*” Many of these travellers were walking great distances e.g. *It given to seven seamen being travellers with a lawful pass from Orford in Suffolk to Plymouth 1s – 0d; It given a seaman travelling from Yarmouth 4d; It given a solger with a lawful pass from Mons in Flanders to Cornwall 4d; It given a woman that had a lawful pass for her child from Wales to Totnes 6d; given a woman having 2 children undon by fire 6d.*

The Upping Stock: Just near the south porch is an Upping Stock, a large stone. It is thought that this may well have been used by people who came to church on horse back and the stone was used to assist in mounting and dismounting from their horse.

Village stocks: Although these are no longer present, in the Churchwardens Accounts of 1678 there is a reference to the stocks being repaired, the upkeep of these would have been the responsibility of the church.

Maintenance of Highways: In the late 17th century the church was responsible for the maintenance of the highways e.g. from the churchwardens accounts of 1678 it states “*pd William Kift for stones for ye high waies 2s 10d*”. In the accounts of 1668 there is mention of repairs made to “*County bridges Hornsay and Rewe which was near Aishmill*”.

Parish Clerk: The church was responsible for paying the wages of the Parish Clerk: e.g. in 1674 accounts “*Item paid pish Clarkes wages for one yeare £2 – 10s - 0d*” .

Parish Bier: Again this is no longer present but in Jeboult's book in 1873 he said that the old parish bier stood in the church porch and that it was unusual and quite a curiosity. Unfortunately there are no photographs of the bier nor is there any trace of it today.

Church house: From a picture of the church and Nynehead Court in 1859 it appears as if the church-house was to the east of the church.

In the church-wardens accounts of the late 17th century there are many entries for the repair of the church house which at that time had an earth floor.

e.g. "*pd Andrew Cross for carriage of earth for ye Church-house floor 6d pd for beating it up 6d*" Lime was also used on the floor e.g. "*pd James Webber for Lyme used about the Church-house floors*".

The roof was thatched e.g. 1670 reed and spars were purchased and a thatcher employed to repair the Church House roof.

In 1677 the annual rent for the church-house was 1 shilling i.e. 5p.

Parish house: This was situated in Wellington in the late 17th century and it must have been of considerable size as the annual rent was £1.

Present day church building: The earliest parts of the present building date back to the 13th century and is of the perpendicular style. The church is built from a good amount of local red PERMO-TRIASSIC rock (a form of sandstone).

Tower: This is 13th century and is a rubble build. The tower is a two stage crenellated tower which is diagonally buttressed. The bell openings are of Somerset Tracery and the tower is wider at the base than at the top.

The church was rough cast in 1682 because the sandstone was porous. A small portion of the rough casting can be seen near the bottom of the tower on the south side. In the Churchwardens Accounts it stated that the church and tower are "*ruf cast, lyme, graivile and sundry burshells of heaire*" having been used.

Extract from the Churchwardens Accounts 1682:-

<i>"Feb 20th It for fower Hogsheads and halfe of Lyme to ruf cast the church</i>	<i>£1 1s 4d</i>
<i>It for six burshells of Heaire & fetching it</i>	<i>4s 8d</i>
<i>It for 2 harffes and a man one day to fetch Graivile to ruf cast the church</i>	<i>2s 6d"</i>
<i>"March 3rd It for fower scoare and five foots of Boarde to make a cradle to Rufe cast</i>	
<i>ye tower</i>	<i>10s 7d</i>
<i>It fower pounds of Boarde naile to make it</i>	<i>1s 8½d</i>
<i>It for five Burshells of Heaire to plaster the tower and fetching it</i>	<i>3s 1¼d</i>
<i>It for fower Hogsheads of Lyme & fetching</i>	<i>18s 0d</i>
<i>It given them in Beare while ruf casting</i>	<i>2s 6d</i>
<i>It paid John Burt towards the ruf casting of the church & tower</i>	<i>£3 10s 0d"</i>

By the middle of the 19th century the rough casting had been removed although some does remain on the east and south walls of the south aisle.

In a drawing of the church by Wheatley in 1838, the north wall beside the tower contained a door and two rather ugly domestic windows. However in 1912 on a visit by the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society they were told that "*Until quite recently the north side of the nave had two ugly windows, brought from a neighbouring house. These were taken out and two windows of similar style to those*

in the tower replaced them". It appears that the north wall was in fact rebuilt at that time as the stonework is very regular in shape and the door was also removed. In order to give the impression of age some older figures in sandstone have been placed on either side of the windows.

We are not sure what type of roof the church had prior to the late 17th century but in the churchwarden accounts of 1678 tiles were purchased for the roof e.g.

<i>"Pd William Oath for six thousand and halfe of Tile Stones at 3s 6d by ye Tousand</i>	<i>£1 2s 9d</i>
<i>pd for carriage of ye same</i>	<i>£1 19s 0d</i>
<i>pd John Buryman for Tyling ye church 3 weeks and 3 days</i>	<i>£1 10s 0d</i>
<i>pd to John Fursland for tending and working the stones</i>	
<i>3 weeks and 3 days</i>	<i>£1 06s 03d</i>
<i>pd our boy 15 days work for making of mortar and carrying stones</i>	<i>13s 09d</i>

The nave was re-roofed in 1971. The roof at that time was in need of repair and the church had to sell one of the treasurers in order to finance the re-roofing. This was a marble tabernacle which was let into the south side of the west wall (as can be seen from a painting of the interior of the church by Barbara Hoyle 1928). The tabernacle was a Mino da Fiesole marble and was the work of Mino Di Giovanni (1431 – 1486). He was born at Poppi in the Casentino in 1431 and had property in Fiesole. The sculpture was remarkable for its gem like finish and extreme delicacy of detail. Mino da Fiesole made a marble tabernacle for the Holy Oils for a church in Italy; it was so lovely that the order was given for a replica for another church. In the centre of the tabernacle is a small painted figure of Christ. The church in which this replica was placed was bombed during the first world war and the original is believed to have been the one in Nynhead. The tabernacle was given to the church by the Rev John Sanford in 1830. The tabernacle was sold to Cardiff Museum in 1970 in order to finance the extensive restoration of the church at that time. The National Museum in Wales purchased the tabernacle for £12,500. The restoration included completely re-roofing the nave, work on the stonework of the tower, repairs to the south wall and re-wiring.

An old doorway to the church can be seen on the west wall just before the Sanford extension. This door had a square top and probably dates back to the time of Henry 4th (1399-1413) reign.

To the left of this original door one can see a more modern extension, this was added by the Sanford family in 1869. This extension was built to house the various Sanford memorial plaques etc. and was designed by William Sanford. Another addition which was added at the same time was the extension which houses the organ and vestry area. *In the additions made by the late William Sanford nothing of importance was sacrificed except a three-light window in the former short transeptal chapel and the small window in the north wall of the chancel. Mr Sanford was a very able amateur architect and personally designed the additions to the church. There were two very pretty rose windows and altogether the addition showed a refinement of taste which put this work quite above what an amateur architect was supposed to be capable of.* Whilst these extensions were being made the church was closed and services were held in the Orangery of Nynhead Court.

Prior to these additions there was a chimney on the east side of the north transept which indicates that there was probably a boiler house below the church in this area. There is some indication of a doorway arch at ground level on the east wall of the Sanford Chapel.

The additions can be seen when comparing the church as it was in 1838 (drawing by Wheatley) and today's church.

The south aisle was added in the 15th century as the result of a legacy left by John Wyke in 1410. This south aisle has buttresses added in order to stabilise the building. Some of these were added as part of the extensions in 1869 because the Sanfords placed a vault under the south aisle to house early members of their family. However, there is one 15th century buttress against the south wall. Obviously the porch would have been added at the same time as the south aisle i.e. 15th century. The barrel roof of the porch is similar in style to that of the south aisle i.e. roof bosses are of a simple style namely consisting of concentric circles.

The nave and tower are the original parts of the church. The nave roof is a wagon roof divided into 24 sections and each intersection is marked by a carved boss. Three of these bosses in the nave are the grotesque faces of 3 green men which are crudely carved and the rest are roses etc. The roof of the nave was in fact renewed in the early 1970's and fortunately the builders left a short length of the original wall plate so that we can see what the original actually looked like. The original wall plate was painted. The capitals on the pillars of the nave are very simple and some of the pillars are leaning to the right, so tie bars were installed in 1959 in order to stabilise the building.

Rood Screen: The oak screen was put in by the son of Richard de Wyke in 1480 along with the rood screen stairs. The screen was repaired in 1840 with parts of the screen from Hillfarrance church and further repairs were carried out in 1957. The fan vaulted screen is of the West Somerset type with pointed heads to the central arch and 4 lights which are filled with tracery of the Exe Valley type with foliated bosses at the intersections, the central one bearing the coat of arms of Richard De Wyke (3 millrinds). Below these are plain panels, those on the north having been renewed in the 1869 extensions, but on the South the original oak panels exist. The original oak panels bear traces of applied tracery and colour which would have been removed at the time of the Reformation. In the mid 16th century the Church of England broke away from the Catholic Church. In 1549 the English Prayer Book was issued the text of which we owe to Thomas Cranmer. A second Prayer Book was then issued in 1552, in which the central doctrine of the service of Holy Communion was declared to be no more than a commemorative rite. Gone were the veneration of saints and most of the icons were removed; monuments were defaced; wall paintings were covered in white wash and stained glass windows were removed if they betrayed any hint of medieval superstition.

The eastern, chancel face (i.e. top part) looks to be original in oak. The rood figures are no longer in situ, although the rood screen stairs are. Originally the screen had doors in the archway so that it could be sealed off from the congregation and the position of the hinges can be seen today.

In the south east corner of the sanctuary there is an early 13th century **piscina** (1220A.D.). The piscina was used for the washing of the communion plate.

The **roof of the chancel and sanctuary** is of the wagon type but is lined with wood and the wall plates consist of beautifully carved roses etc. The capitals on the pillars are also very elaborately carved varieties of flowers and plants.

The pulpit: In the report of a survey of the church written by Edmund Rack in the 1780's he described the pulpit and reading desk as being all of "*neat panelled wainscot*". The present pulpit is 19th century (probably from the 1869 restoration) and originally there were scroll pieces between the front pillars as can be seen in a water colour painting of the church by Barbara Hoyle painted in 1928. The two bolts on the top rail indicate where candlesticks formerly stood.

The font: This is a 15th century font of perpendicular style and is placed near the south door entrance.

The Squint or hagnoscope: At the entrance to the Sanford Memorial Chapel there is a hagnoscope or squint. Prior to the Reformation this was the only place where one could see the elevation of the host i.e. breaking of the bread, as the chancel would have been curtained off. A Priest would be by the hagnoscope during the service and when the point was reached when the bread was being broken he would indicate to the bell ringer to ring the bell. This would indicate to all the village that the most important part of the service had been reached.

Arch beside the organ: Having moved the organ into the area north of the chancel, the organist has great difficulty in hearing the congregation, so in order to try to improve this, the arch was cut in the 1930's and the Methuen Memorial tablet was placed in the wall.

The windows:

The Chancel East wall: in the centre is a standing figure of Christ in a blue green robe with white cuffs and sash, holding a crossed staff in his left hand and with his right hand raised in blessing. This window is early 19th century made by Heaton, Butler and Bayne.

The Reynolds windows: On the south side of the sanctuary there are two small enamels which were made to the designs of Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792). The windows were designed on one of his visits to Nynhead Court. The one on the left is Faith and the one on the right is Hope.

The north sanctuary window: This is based on an Italian Renaissance picture and this was restored in 1985 in memory of Essex and Hester Cholmondeley. This window represents Charity.

All Saints' Window: The east window in the south aisle is the All Saints Window. This is quite an unusual window. The original window was designed by Mr Drake of Exeter in the 15th century. The only original glass is the pane containing the female figure of St Margaret in the top left hand corner and the small pieces at the top of the window. The rest was copied from the original, which was in a state of disrepair (probably by Mr Toms of Wellington in the late 19th century).

The details of the Saints at the top of the window are from left to right:-

St Margaret, wearing a red robe and a white mantle powdered with yellow rosettes and standing upon a black and white ornamental base. She has a dragon at her feet, which she is piercing with a crossed staff. She holds a book in her left hand.

St Barbara, with tower and palm.

St Catherine, with sword and wheel.

The others are unknown saints each of which holds a book.

The Saints in the main windows are:- In left hand window- St Matthew with the collecting box; St Philip with the wooden cross; St Stephen with the basket of bread; St Bartholomew with the butchers knife; 2nd from the left- St Andrew with the cross saltire; St Paul with the sword and book; St Peter with the crossed keys; 3rd from the left - St Simon with the saw; St John with the eagle and chalice; St James the Great with the crossed staff and flask; right hand window - St Thomas with the spear; St Thaddeus with the club; St Matthias with the axe and St James the lesser with the club.

The St James and the Mary Magdalene windows on the south wall are also the work of Mr Toms and are dated and signed by him (1859). The Toms Organ and Stained Glass Works were on the corner of High Street and South Street in Wellington.

The picture of Mary Magdalene is said to be based on a painting of her by Timoteo della Vite in the Bologna Gallery.

Both the St James and Mary Magdalene windows were re-leaded in 1984.

Armorial Window: The other window on the south wall is thought to have been a domestic window partly of the Georgian period and may contain some 16th century glass. The decoration of the three lights is an achievement of the Royal Arms of Henry VIII, Edward VI or Elizabeth I. The window was donated by Lady Caroline Anne Stanhope, who became the second wife of Edward Sanford in 1851. The gold heraldic lion rampant guardant (not crowned) carrying a banner with a Tudor rose on a blue background (which is one of the Tudor badges). The shield is quartered with the arms of England and France. The red heraldic dragon rampant carrying a banner with a gold portcullis on a blue background is another Tudor badge.

This window was also restored and refitted by John Toms of Wellington in 1851 and work was also carried out on the window by Hugh Arnold who died in 1915..

The window on the **west wall of the south aisle** shows a single picture of THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST. The figure of Christ is wearing only a white loincloth and standing in water, with slightly bowed head and hands together in front of his face. Behind Christ there is a crowd of men and women and above them is a flying dove against an aureole. John the Baptist's hand extends into this light holding a golden dish from which he is pouring water onto Christ's head.

The window was in memory of John Ayshford Sanford, Lieutenant R.N. who died at Portsmouth in 1851 aged 26 and was the fourth son and fifth child of Edward Ayshford Sanford and Henrietta his wife.

The **window in the west wall of the tower** illustrates THE ANNUNCIATION. The Angel Gabriel with haloed head and bare feet, wearing a white shirt, purple robe, a white full length dalmatic with gold lining and a green sash. The right hand is raised above the head with the forefinger raised in blessing and the figure appears to be standing on blue and gold clouds. Mary is wearing a blue robe, a white cloak

decorated with gold flowers and lined with purple and wearing brown slippers. Her head is bowed and haloed and her hands are crossed on her chest.

The window is late 19th century and was made by James Powell & Son. The window was in memory of the Rev William Walrond who served the parish between 1866 and 1884 who died in Yatton in March 1887.

The windows on the north wall: These were installed in 1912 by Mr Bligh Bond to replace “two ugly domestic windows”. They were made by James Powell & Son. One window has St Paul, bearded and wearing red and green robes, with a blue background; St Clement of Alexandria wearing a crossed stole, with a red background; and St Augustine of Hippo, mitres and robed, with a blue background. The other window contains John Wycliffe, bearded and wearing a brown robe with a fur collar and hat, against a red background; St Francis of Assisi, bearded and in a brown habit, with a blue background and Dante, in a brown garment and hat, against a red background.

The Rose Window in Sanford Memorial Chapel: This window was made by Heaton, Butler & Bayne and fitted by Bligh Bond at the time the memorial chapel was built in 1869.

The Rose Window in the organ extension: Encircling the monogram in the centre is written in clear Roman Capitals MATRI AMATAE which means “to a beloved mother”. This window was made by Heaton, Butler & Bayne and was fitted at the time of the 1869 extension. It is probably a memorial to Mrs Mary Sanford (nee Marshall), mother of Edward Ayshford Sanford.

Sanford Roundels: In the Sanford Memorial Chapel windows there are a series of roundels bearing the family coats of arms, the earliest dating from 1638. These are:- right hand window - Ayshford dated 1638; Ayshford impaling Bluett; Ayshford impaling Hache; Ayshford impaling Courtenay; and the left hand window Sanford, Langham and Stanhope; Sanford impaling Marshall; Sanford impaling Anstruther; Courtenay impaling Sanford.,

Reredos: The relatively modern reredos (1871) on the east wall is in three parts. On each north and south, are lovely enamel paintings on opaque glass; they were made and burnt in by Messrs. Powell of London in 1871 and are some of his earliest work. These panels numbered 21 in his order book and in total he made 968. The one on the right is listed as “Walk to Emmaus” and depicts Jesus and Peter and the one on the left is “Feeding my lambs”. They were designed by Holiday and cost 6 guineas in total. They were ordered on 11th October 1871 and were some of the earliest work of this sort that Powell produced.

The bas-relief in the centre is of the Ascension and was carved by Mr Seymour of Taunton.

The Altar: This was a purpose built table. The slab top is constructed from a tropical hardwood. The frieze contains richly carved roses, lilies and foliage. The top rests on pillars with the capitals carved with roses, lilies and foliage. The pillars and pilasters are constructed from macassar ebony; the frieze and capitals are of a fruitwood (or possibly lime).

The style of the carving is similar to that of Mr Seymour of Taunton who also carved the chancel wallplate and the reredos.

Moses: On the north wall of the chancel there are two recesses in which there are figures of Moses and Christ. Moses is a bronze figure by Barbedienne and is a copy of the great statue by Michaelangelo (1475-1564). This bronze was bought by William Sanford on the 28th January 1884 from suppliers at 25 Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, London. The bronze was sent that day by Great Western Fast Goods train. The price of the bronze was fr500 or £20 and the cost of transporting it from Paris was 5s 10d (*this information is from the receipt for payment sent to William Sanford on 11th March 1884 by the supplier*). Moses has horns but there does not seem to be any record of Moses having horns other than in the statue by Michaelangelo. It is thought that the horns were due to a mis-translation of the Vulgate Bible, the actual translation states that Moses 'faced glowed as he came down from Mount Sinai'. The manufacturers mark on the bronze is F.Barbedienne Fondateur. Ferdinand Barbedienne (1810-92) was a prominent Second Empire furniture manufacturer and the best known 19th century Parisian bronze founder. He worked for Barye and other leading sculptors. From 1839 he worked in association with Achille Collas who had devised a method for making reductions of sculpture and by 1847 he had established a factory for the production of bronzes in Paris. Therefore the bronze of Moses must have been produced sometime between 1840-92.

Christ: The other statue is of Christ and is a beautiful figure in porcelain; it is a copy of the statue by Thorvaldson of Copenhagen and was made in that city in 1830.

Reverend John Sanford (1777-1855) was the vicar of Nynehead between 1811 and 1834 but although technically he was vicar until 1834 a curate ran the church from 1818 because John Sanford moved to Italy. He married in 1819 to a divorced woman named Eliza and was excommunicated from the church. He went to Milan in 1831 and then was in Florence from 1832 – 1837. It was whilst he was in Florence that he amassed a major collection of Florentine art. The most notable items which he presented to Nynehead were the tabernacle in 1833 and the two della Robbias all of which are fifteenth century sculpture that he purchased and the Male Angel by Costoli but he also had a large collection of art masterpieces.

Much of his important collection passed by descent to the late Lord Methuen of Corsham Court in Wiltshire. The collection passed to the Methuens because John Sanford was the father in law of the second Lord Methuen as John's only daughter, Anna Horatia Caroline, married Frederick Henry Paul Methuen.

Della Robbias: These are two of the great treasures of Nynehead Church and they were given to the church by the Reverend John Sanford in 1852. They were purchased in Florence. Under the tower is a splendid Madonna; the Virgin Mary is depicted kneeling in adoration and the child lies in a fold of her cloak. The sculpture, executed in enamelled terra-cotta, is the work of Luca della Robbia (1399-1482), the medium being a secret of della Robbia.

Luca della Robbia was born in Florence and was the great scholar of Donatello the Italian sculptor. Luca della Robbia found that marble was too slow to work in order to convey his ideas so he invented a method using terra-cotta and then glazed it. On the

west wall of the south transept there is further work of della Robbia but this was by his nephew Andrea della Robbia (1435-1523). This piece lacks the touch of the master, Luca, but nevertheless it is a fine piece of work.

Bust of Reverend John Sanford: This stands in the Sanford Memorial Chapel and was sculptured by Aristodome Costoli. The figure is a typical Victorian family bust carved in 1835 in white marble.

Elijah: A splendid stone statue of Elijah stands at the entrance to the Sanford Memorial Chapel. This statue was carved by William Josiah Giles of Wellington (1861-1908). He was born in Courtland Road, Wellington and learned his trade of sculptor in stone, wood and clay. He was the younger son of John Giles, an overlooker in the blanket weaving shed at Messrs. Fox's factory at Tonedale. William's business premises were at 76 North Street. He had been a pupil of Harry Hems, the well known Exeter sculptor. He liked using the clay from Poole for many of his models. Other examples of his work can be found locally e.g.: pulpits of Sampford Arundel, Rockwell Green and West Buckland churches. The lectern and credence table at Langford Budville church etc. His premature death at the age of 46 was caused by a fall.

Memorials:

Mosaic Tablets on the east wall: These are set into the east wall on either side of the altar. The one on the left is the Sermon on the Mount and the one on the right The Last Supper and they are termed 'Opus Sectile'. They were ordered by William Ayshford Sanford on 20/7/1881 and were made in 1882/83 by James Powell of Whitefriars. The tablets were in memory of his mother and stepmother. The Sermon on the Mount cost £28 and the Last Supper £33. They were designed by Hardgrave. Mr Powell, it seems, was concerned about glass produced in his factory which had become contaminated. He discovered that tiny specks of clay from the crucibles in which the glass was melted was causing the contamination. Not being one to tolerate waste, he experimented and found that this waste glass could be ground to a powder and baked. This would produce a solid material with an "eggshell" surface, which could be used for mosaics. The range of colours was almost unlimited therefore rather than small regularly shaped pieces being used to make up the picture, each piece could be cut to shape in order to fit a part of the design

The inscription under the Sermon on the Mount is:- Sarah Elizabeth Harriet daughter of Lord Arthur Charles Hervey Bishop of Bath and Wells born 13th January 1842 married to William Ayshford Sanford 5th December 1874 died 26th November 1877. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.

The inscription under the Last Supper is:- Sarah Ellen daughter of Henry Seymour of Knoyle born 24th April 1823 married 14th May 1857 to William Ayshford Sanford died 14th August 1867. Peace I leave with you my peace I give unto you not as the world giveth give I unto you.

In a book written in 1934 it stated that Gainsborough had stayed at the Court at one time and had painted a picture on the East Wall but there is no sign of this today.

Wyke Memorial: This memorial is on the north wall of the sanctuary. The Wyke family lived in the Court for some 250 years and they were responsible for the building of the South Aisle and the Rood Screen. Let into the north wall of the

sanctuary is a stone memorial to Richard Wyke of Nynehead Court, dated 1590. The inscription on the memorial states: "*Here lieth interred Richard Wike of Ninhead in the County of Somerset Esquier who died the 10 of June 1590 being then the age of 65 years. And Margaret his wife daughter of George Role of Stevenston in the County of Devon Esquier who died the 12 of August 1578 being then of the age of 41 years parents of 17 children vic 6 sons and 11 daughters*".

The name Wyke is derived from the Old English 'wic', meaning 'a dwelling, a building or collection of buildings for special purposes, a farm, a dairy farm, and in the plural 'a hamlet, a village'. The use of the word Wick in the sense of a dairy farm was very common in the 13th and 14th centuries.

Male Angel: This stands in the Sanford Memorial Chapel and is a life size sculpture of a male angel in white marble by Aristodome Costoli (1803-1871) a star pupil of Canova. The angel was carved in 1840. The sculpture was almost certainly commissioned and given to the church by Reverend John Sanford, uncle to Edward Ayshford Sanford, during his residence at the Villa Torrigiana in Florence. It is in memory of Henrietta the beloved wife of Edward Ayshford Sanford, daughter of Sir William Langham who died in 1837. Henrietta was the mother 7 children. Henrietta was the founder of the village school, which was based upon the writings of John Locke the philosopher. For many years the school was run at her expense. It was stated in the Church Monthly of 1891 that the school was started in about 1818.

Locke Memorial: This is situated on the east wall of the south transept and is a slate memorial to John Locke (1632-1704), the great philosopher. Locke was a great friend of Mr Edward Clarke of Chipley Park, Nynehead. John Locke was born at Wrington near Bristol and studied as a physician but was renowned for his thoughts on education, philosophy, politics, economics and religious toleration. His father could not afford to educate him but Col. Alexander Popham became his patron, sending him to Westminster and Oxford. He was a regular visitor to Chipley. As he was a physician the Clarkes consulted him continually about their health and his letters to them are full of advice on dealing with ague and childhood illnesses, with instructions for making medicines and diet drinks. The Clarkes kept a bedchamber with a dressing –room and closet for him. During Locke's exile to Holland he would write to the Clarkes about the education of their children and these became the foundation for '*Some thoughts Concerning Education*' published in 1693 and dedicated to Edward Clarke. Also whilst in Holland he advised the Clarkes about the lay out of their gardens etc.

The inscription on the memorial tablet is:

*A little booke and taper's light
Did solace me in my last night
My taper spent, booke clos'ed I sate
In bed thereon to meditate;
With what improvement thinke I know
Then voluimes more, or sunne can show.*

Clarke Memorial: This is situated in the right hand corner of the south transept. It is a large memorial to Elizabeth Clarke of Chipley Park, who died in 1667 aged 42 years. The monument was made at Milverton and cost £25. Edward Clarke and William Sanford did not get on with each other as they were on opposite sides of parliament. The Clarke house no longer exists at Chipley Park.

Rev John and Eliza Sanford Memorial tablet: This is set into the floor at the west end of the south transept. There is in fact a family vault for the Sanfords under the south transept. Henrietta Sanford nee Langham was buried in the vault in 1835 along with other members of the family.

South Transept: Humfry Wyart 1672; Richard Wyart 1693; Gustavus Venner 1717; Rev. John Sanford 1855;

West wall of South Transept: Rev John Sanford 1855; Eliza Sanford 1857.

Tomb Chest – Edward Ayshford Sanford: In the Sanford Memorial Chapel is a Tomb Chest in memory of Edward Ayshford Sanford who died in 1871. The chest is on the north wall of the chapel and contains roundels on the front with the arms of Langham, Ayshford Sanford and Stanhope. Edward was the builder responsible for the major restoration of the church in 1869 e.g. Sanford Memorial Chapel and organ chamber and vestry.

Floor tablets in the Sanford Memorial Chapel to: Martin Sanford 1643 ; Henry Sanford 1644 ; William Sanford 1715.

Wall tablets in the Sanford Memorial Chapel: John Sanford 1711; William Sanford 1770; Anne Sanford 1777; John Sanford 1779; William A Sanford 1833; Lady Caroline Sanford 1853; Mary Sanford 1855; Col. Henry A. Sanford 1905;

North Transept-West side: On the floor is a memorial tablet to Ellianor Pike who died in 1722 aged 72 who had been a faithful servant to the Clarke family for more than 50 years. This is one of very few memorials to a servant found within a church.

Nave: War memorial 1914-18. Charles Gulliver; Frank Shaw; Albert Borrows; Henry Brown; Henry Scadding and Francis Hayman.

Methuen Memorial: On the north wall beside the organ there is a piece of rose marble let into the side of the arch. This marble is a memorial that was erected by Lady Methuen in memory of her two sisters. The translation of the inscription is “to dear sisters by a sister”. Lady Methuen died in 1941 and her sisters in 1935 and 1936. Lady Methuen was a daughter of W.A.Sanford.

British Legion Standard: The British Legion Standard was ‘laid up’ in the Parish Church after the closure of the Nynehead Branch of the British Legion in May 1970.

Organ: The organ is thought to have come originally from Chipley Park and was bought by the churchwardens in 1821 for £87. The purchase was funded by Alice Weekes. A trust fund was set up to pay the organist, using income from land in the village. It was stipulated that the organist: ‘...*shall during the time he shall continue organist of the said church punctually perform such duties as are usual for organists of churches to perform, such organist from time to time to be elected by heirs and assigns of the said William Ayshford Sanford*’. It was originally a one manual instrument and was placed under the tower. It is thought that the original Single Great Manual was manufactured in the 18th century. Later it was enlarged to a two manual

instrument with pedals and was removed to its present position when the Sanfords extended the church in 1869. It is thought that the swell was manufactured in the 19th century and was made by Vowles of Bristol. The carving on the front came from the rood screen at Hillfarrance church.

Church Chest: In 1559 Queen Elizabeth 1st ordered that a chest with three different locks in which to keep the registers and other papers of the church. One of the keys was to be kept by the vicar and the other two by the churchwardens This meant that in order to open the chest all three had to be present. The actual chest in Nynehead today was purchased in 1748 from a William Cox for 10s-00d, the three locks cost 2 shillings and the clasps 7shillings and 6pence. The parish coffer contained the usual Parish papers, books of accounts, apprenticeship indentures and a warrant for the burial of a felo-de-se at the crossroads all of which are now in the County Record Office.

Bells: The church has 6 bells but they have not been rung since 1989 and an attempt is being made to re-instal them. The wooden beams have been attacked by woodworm, the death watch beetle and damp. Originally the bells were rung from the ringing chamber which is some 8 feet below the bells but this is no longer practical. Before the Reformation in 1530, Nynehead Church had only one bell. This bell was rung three times at the Elevation of the Host in order to let the people in the village know that the most important moment of the Mass had arrived. This pre-Reformation bell is still in the tower, it was cast by Thomas Geffries in about 1500. This is the only known bell where the founder used capital letters throughout. Thomas Geffries was Sheriff of Bristol in 1525 and he died in 1545. It was the custom in those days to cast bells in the churchyard. At the Reformation when bells were broken up for the metal, this bell was buried in the churchyard. Some years later it was dug up and restored to the tower. The inscription on the bell reads as follows:- “Sanctus maria Ora pro Nobis” i.e. Holy Mary pray for us. This bell is the tenor, is 44 inches in diameter and weighs about three quarters of a ton. Its note is F.

The treble bell is 29¼ inches in diameter and was cast by J.Taylor & Son of Loughborough. The inscription on the bell says “The worshippers in this church put me here in 1907. Vicar H.C.Launder M.A. Churchwardens James Bailey and E.C.A.Sanford C.M.G. Its note is D and it weighs 5 hundredweight.

The second bell is 30½ inches in diameter and is marked ANNO DOMINI 1630 and was cast by Richard & Roger Purdue. The note is C and it weighs 5 hundredweight.

The third bell is 32½ inches in diameter and is marked Thomas Shippeard C/W I.P. Exon 1661. Its note is Bb and it weighs 6 hundredweight.

The 4th bell is 35½ inches in diameter and is marked ANNO DOMINI 1630 and was cast by Richard Purdue I and Roger Purdue I, Stoford. Note is A and it weighs 8 hundredweight.

The 2nd and 4th bells were cast in 1630 by Richard Purdue of Stoford near Yeovil. The 3rd was cast by John Pennington of Exeter in 1661. His mark is well authenticated and this is the only bell by him now existing in the county.

The 5th bell is 39 inches in diameter and is marked Recast by J.Taylor of Loughborough in 1894, originally it was cast in ANNO DOMINI 1622 R.P. Note is G and it weighs 11 hundredweight.

When the ceiling dropped in the ringing chamber in September 1989 it was found that the builder had only secured the centre beam holding the ceiling up with a couple of nails and had not sunk the beam into the wall. When the ceiling was removed a piece

of paper containing the name of the plasterer and his labourer was found i.e. dated June 27th 1909 J.Edbrooke Plasterer 49 years of age and P.J.Cook 22 years labourer.

Church Restoration: In the 1780s Edmund Rack gave a full description of the church, much of which we would recognise today. There were however, some differences. Inside the church there was a singing gallery at the west end under the tower, and a pulpit and reading desk, all of 'neat panelld wainscot'. The church was not kept in good condition. The communion table was covered with '*an old worm eaten blue cloth fringed white*', while the floor, composed of mixed bricks and stone was '*not damp but kept dirtily*'. A century later the church looked very different. The gallery had been removed and an organ had been installed in 1821. Further restoration took place in 1869. During this restoration the church was closed and services were held in the Orangery of Nynehead Court. The restoration involved the building of the Sanford Memorial Chapel and the extension of the sanctuary plus the removal of the old horsebox pews which were replaced by modern oak pews. The organ was moved into its new position by Mr John Toms of Wellington and the organ was enlarged.

Lighting: From the Wellington Weekly News of January 18th 1905 it reported that the church was lit by electricity for the first time. The lighting consisted of candelabras fitted with sockets containing porcelain candles with flame-shaped frosted bulbs. There were 72 lights each of five-candle power. In a water colour of the interior of the church painted by Barbara Hoyles in 1928 it appears that these lights were still in situ. Each candelabra seemed to have 6 candles mounted on a blue base ring and there was a smaller version containing 4 candles above the pulpit. The main candelabras were fixed to the ceiling by chains as the one above the pulpit hung from a bracket fixed to the rood screen.

The church was re-wired in 1968.

Incumbents:

- 1292 Rev Dr Bovett
- 1315 Rich le Bellringer (ref: Bishop Drockenford's Register)
- 1347 William Wysman (ref: History of Taunton Priory by Rev Thomas Hugo)
- 1350 John Crispyn
- 1350 William Esch
- 1360 William de Esse
- 1362 William Donekyn (ref: Bishop Ralph's register)
- 1403 John Shotel
- 1434 Thomas Bonda
- 1435 John Webb
- 1436 Peter Byssshop
- 1438 Robert Asshcombe
- 1439 John Erle
- 1445 Walt Lovekyn
- 1451 Nick Cokesdone
- 1497 John Prowse
- 1501 John Samson
- 1507 John Trigge
- 1508 Thomas Cokysden

1528 Joh Marler
 1554 Henry Dunscombe
 1564 Thos Mudforde
 1567 Pet Pancharde
 1570 Anthony Middleton
 1618 Thos Pearse A.B.
 1638 Sam Perian
 1641 Francis Gough
 1671 Rich Pearse
 1680 Jeff Hill
 1700 Jac Knight A.B.
 1721 Sam Thornbury
 1722 Sam Shenton
 1723 Joh Dossy A.B.
 1760 Phil Atherton
 1782 Robt Baker
 1786 Thos Bovet D.C.L.
 1798 J.Williams
 1811 John Sanford
 1834 Thomas Charles Tanner
 1866 William Henry Walrond
 1884 James Arthur Hervey
 1890 John Davidson Munro Murray
 1895 Harry Commins Launder
 1920 Dallas George Brooks
 1923 William Edward Catlow
 1928 Thomas Gordon Murray Macmorran
 1944 H.W.F.Fagan
 1945 Canon H.G.England
 1949 Preb J.H.Grinter
 1955 (May) R.J.C.Lloyd (licensed curate in charge)
 1957 (December) until October 1966 R.J.C.Lloyd
 1967(May) Preb. C.M.Wedgewood M.A. (first vicar of the united benefice i.e. with St John's Wellington.) 21/12/67 resigned March 1972.
 Interegnum Rev Basil Bazell.
 1972 Preb. John T.George
 1982 Preb. Terence Walter Stokes
 2000 Preb. Colin Randall
 2006 (January) Rev Margi Campbell appointed Team Vicar of the East Wellington Group i.e. Bradford on Tone; Langford Budville; Nynhead; Runnington; West Buckland;

Churchwardens:

1668 Thomas Shepard; Christop Mountsteven; Robert Kingston; William Cookesly; Edward Bickley
 1671 Edward Bickly; Edward Perry.
 1674 Bridgett Bragg; James Ley and Thomas Beddle.
 1675 Martin Greenwood jr; William Weeke
 1676 Nicholas Thomas and George Bicknell.
 1677 Francis Cooksley and William Cox.

1678 Robert Kingston and Francis Cooksley
1679 William Jacob and John Blewett
1680 John Blewett and William Jacob
1681 Richard Wyatt and Robert Jacob.
1682 Richard Wyatt and Robert Jacob
1683 Robert Jacob
1684 John Bluett jnr and James Webber
1685 James Webber and William Webber

1888 S.Bailey and J.Kidner
1892 W. A. Sanford and S.Bailey
1906 J.R.Ash and J. Bailey
1907 J.Bailey and Col E.C.A.Sanford
1913 G.S.Lysaght and L.Mortimer
1917 C.Ludlow and L.Mortimer
1934 Major Stobart
1940 W.C.A. Sanford
1941 W.T.Baker and W.C.A.Sanford
1944 W.T.Baker and T.Luxton
1964 W.T.Baker and Mrs G.I.Janson-Potts
1969 I.W.Darby and Mrs G.I. Janson-Potts
1972 F.C.Baker and I.W.Darby
1973 I.W.Darby and A.J.Howe
1985 I.W.Darby and A.J.Lock
1996 A.J.Lock and G.J.Sparks
2003 A.J.Lock and A.J.Howe
2005 A.J.Howe and M. Harding

A.J.Lock
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