



St John the Baptist, North Baddesley

Graffiti Survey Summary

A team from Southampton Archaeology Society visited the church on 11th September 2018. The team consisted of M Dowell, G&R James, S Hanna, S&D Stewart, K Wardley and B&J Webb.



Figure 1 St John's from the SW



Figure 2 St John's from the NE

The church is located on a small rise some distance from the main village. It has associations with the Knights Hospitallers, whose Preceptory was located opposite on the site of what is now an 18th century manor house. The Hospitallers link is evidenced by the presence of their crosses on shields on the roof ribs and a tomb in the chancel and the south door's ironwork.

The church consists of a nave and chancel of rubble and flint with features dating to the 14th and 15th centuries respectively, although the church is no doubt much earlier. The brick tower has an external plaque dating its construction to 1674, and also bearing the initials ST and CW. The south porch is probably 17th century. Restoration took place in the late 19th century.

Some interesting graffiti was found here, mostly around the south doorway. Striking is a large hand outline on the east side of this doorway, with another possible hand



Figure 3 Hospitallers cross on tomb

outline beneath, filled with a mesh pattern. The hand is well known to the church and was the source of inspiration for the design of a modern stained glass window opposite in the north wall. There are also names, initials and dates (some relatively recent), crosses, and some possible ritual protection or apotropaic marks in the form of double Vs and a “butterfly” shape.



Figure 5 Double V by S doorway



Figure 4 Hand outline on S doorway

The wooden screen bears the initials TF and date 1602 and is thought to come from North Stoneham church, thus linking the initials to Thomas Fleming. The pulpit seems contemporary and bears the well carved initials I M.



Figure 6 The screen with initials TF and 1602



Figure 7 Initials IM on pulpit

The gallery was apparently built in 1822 but contains earlier timbers. The top of the vertical timber supporting the gallery front has an impressive group of 23 overlapping compass-drawn circles at the top, which could be apotropaic in function.

Along the top of the diagonal frontal support joining it on the southern side are a number of incised letters, including many Ms and Ws, which may well be protective also.



Figure 8 Intersecting circles in gallery



Figure 9 Re-used timbers bearing graffiti at front of gallery