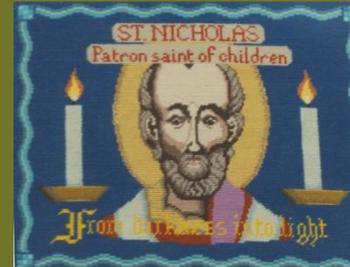


www.stnicholaschurch.org.uk

THE KNEELERS



THE KNEELER'S PRAYER

I am not made for boots or shoes,
Pray use me for your knees,
And after use there is a rail
On which to place me, please.

(from the Guildford Diocesan Exhibition Catalogue)

St. Nicholas' Church
THAMES DITTON

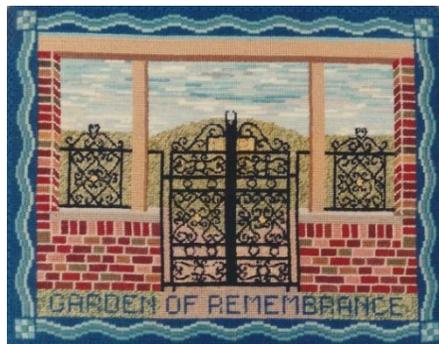


In 1980 a small band of enthusiastic ladies began to work the kneelers in this church. From this small beginning has grown the collection of almost 200 kneelers we now see; five of these were made by men.

Since we are so close to the River Thames, the river was to be a unifying feature, either as a symbolic flowing river through the design or as a wavy border.

Close examination of the kneelers reveals a rich variety of themes reflecting many aspects of the life of the Church in Thames Ditton.

The Church: You will find pictures of the outside, the Garden of Remembrance, the windows, the font, candles, music, the bell tower, bell sallies and several cheeky choir boys. St Nicholas, our Patron Saint, is represented by a bishop's mitre and three purses and by an icon. There are also kneelers for former vicars.



The life of the Church is shown by the coats-of-arms of King's College, Cambridge (Patrons of Living) and the Diocese of Guildford, while the Mothers' Union, Wives' Group, Guild of Vergers, Fellowship Club, Guides, Brownies and the Care Guild are all depicted.

The Bible: Many Bible stories are told in simple pictures and there are splendid kneelers telling the Christmas and Easter stories.

Creation: Creation and the world about us have inspired flowers, trees, birds, insects, fish and the four seasons. Swans, which abound on the Thames, are a frequent choice.

History: There is a stag which reminds us that the area was a favourite Royal Hunting Forest in Tudor times, while a copy of the Cheke Brass links us to the people down the ages who have worshipped here in St Nicholas' Church.

Nearer our own time, you will find a Remembrance Sunday kneeler, a map of the Falkland Islands and several kneelers commemorating the Royal Weddings.



In 1984 the kneelers formed part of an Exhibition of Kneelers in Guildford Cathedral, and were seen again in the Diocesan Exhibition "In Praise of Embroidery". As a result of this, we were included in a new book entitled "Embroidered Church Kneelers", and special mention was made of the way in which the kneelers are clearly seen as one enters the Church. In 1985 they were an outstanding feature of a Festival of Flowers at St Nicholas'. In 1994, at Alexandra Palace, several kneelers were included in an exhibition of 2,500 kneelers from around the world.

In 1996 the Cave Chapel was created and a further working party was set up to provide 20 kneelers to fit under the new chairs. The modern designs were to complement the new furniture and were based on the Resurrection Window. They were birds: the phoenix and eagle are symbols of the resurrection, the dove for peace and the cockerel for repentance. They were completed in 1998.

We are grateful to all those who created these kneelers and who gave not only their time and talents, but who also paid for their materials. We are also grateful to those who generously made donations and to the Care Guild without whose support we could not have begun the project. We are fortunate in having a complete photographic record.

"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof."