

The heraldry in St Lawrence Church includes memorial tablets on the walls and tombstones in the floor of the porch. But we start with starts with a splendidly carved **Royal Arms** over the entrance door.



The Royal Arms of George III, in the porch

They are George III's and this carving of them was bought in 1811. When Henry VIII became head of the Church of England at the Reformation, it was required that the Royal Arms be displayed in churches. Often they were replaced at the start of a new reign so old ones are rare. The quartered shield shows (numbering clockwise from the top left corner) the arms of England, Scotland, England again and Ireland; on the small shield in the middle, the Hanoverian arms comprised of Brunswick, Luneburg and Westphalia. The whole shield is surrounded by the Garter and supported by the lion and the unicorn. Above them all stands the crowned lion crest of England. Underneath, a scroll carries the Royal motto *Dieu et mon Droit*.

As you enter the church, it may be possible to make out, high up to the left of the west window of the south aisle, the very darkened arms of **Harrison** (left side) and **Ballard** (right). These are for John Butler Harrison of Amery House (d 1767 aged 27) and his two wives, Elizabeth Ballard (d 1765 aged 17), daughter of The Reverend John Ballard DD, and Frances Ballard (d 1767 aged 27),

daughter of Robert Ballard, merchant of Southampton.

To the north of the main altar, there is a memorial to the **Hawkins** family. The motto scroll has been broken but should read: *NON SIBI SOLUM* - "not for himself alone". The memorial starts with Lawrence Hawkins and his son Matthew (d 1732), runs through four generations to James (1756-1844) and Isabella his wife (d 1841 aged 71). There were many Hawkins' in Alton between the mid 17th and 19th centuries. It seems that the first two Lawrences were clothiers and that the second owned the Swan Inn; his widow, Joan, owned the Windmill House and leased it to the Parish Officers for 14 years in 1746 for use as a parish pest house. A strong Hawkins connection with the brewing industry continued in the 1700s and early 1800s. James, the last mentioned, went to London in 1773, aged 16½, and returned 68 years later in 1841.



The memorial to Terry and White

On the south wall, near the Galilee Chapel altar, there is a memorial tablet for **Terry** and **White**, with a coat of arms beneath the inscription. This commemorates "William Parker Terry Esq, youngest son of Michall (sic) Terry of Dummer House in this county, proprietor of the rectoral tithe of this parish" and says that he married "Rebecca, daughter of Benjamin White, of Selborne." Her uncle was the celebrated naturalist and curate Gilbert White, of the same family as the Basingstoke, Farnham, Selborne, South

Warnborough and Yateley Whites, who had settled in the area for the previous 400 years. William Terry (d 1810 aged 63) bought Hill House, 1 High Street in 1794; his nephew, Stephen, later rented Wyards, Basingstoke Road, and was known to Jane Austen and her family; and another nephew, Michael, was curate of Medstead between 1803 and 1812. The Terry family vault lies beneath the floor in the centre of the Galilee Chapel.

On the south wall, just east of the entrance porch, a memorial tablet is for **Lee** and **Pedley**. It commemorates "William Lee Esq of Anstey House (d 1814 aged 55) and his wife Anne his widow (d 1844 aged 80)." Her family name was Pedley and she married him in 1791. The Lees came from Farnham. They were mercers and drapers and owned or rented various properties in Alton. From 1759, they owned Lansdowne House (now the HSBC Bank, 74 High Street). In 1789, William became a brewer and, in 1807, bought Anstey House (now Alton Convent) and became Lord of the Manor of Anstey. He was involved in Hawkins' brewery and acquired several alehouses in Alton.

The candelabra in the choir stalls show, on the north side, the arms of the **Province of Canterbury** and, nearer the altar, the **Diocese of Winchester** in both of which Alton lies. On the south side, they are not strictly heraldic but show the badge of **St Lawrence** nearer the altar and the letters 'xpr' (or *XPC*), which is an Anglicised version of the Greek letters $\chi\rho\zeta$, the first two and last letters (a usual abbreviation) of $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$ (Christos or **Christ**).

The tombstones on the floor of the porch remain. They are very worn and difficult to identify. However, careful study shows that three are for the **Butler** family of Amery House and Chauntsingers. The inner left one commemorates Elizabeth (née **Caiger** of

Micheldever?), buried in 1703/4, and her husband Daniel Butler, buried in 1709. The Butler arms are a typical example of canting or punning heraldry; the covered cups refer to the occupation of butler and the most prominent Butlers were Marquess' of Ormonde, Hereditary Chief Butlers of England.

The centre one, nearest the church door, is for Anne (née **Harwood**), wife John Butler (d 1723), who was the grandson of Daniel and Elizabeth above, and son of the John and Catherine of the tombstone below. Unusually the arms are shown on a shield with helm and crest instead more correctly, for a woman, on a lozenge on its own; maybe it was intended for her husband also but the inscription was not extended to include him. Anne died in 1703/4. The Register also records the deaths of two Butler infants in 1703: Hannah on 13 August and Harry on 9 September, a sad record of how easily and quickly disease could run through a family in the same house.

The centre one, nearest the outer door, is for John Butler (1652/3 - 1719), son of Daniel and Elizabeth, above, and his wife Catherine, (née **Pink**). These Butlers were related to the Butler Harrisons who lived at Amery later. John Butler Harrison (d 1767) is commemorated on a mural tablet inside the church high up in the south west corner (qv the first mural tablet described above). He was the great great nephew of the John Butler of this tombstone.

Another tombstone, in the churchyard paving south of the tower, is hopelessly worn. It appears to be the same style as the others and can just be seen to be for a Butler but with a different wife from above. Perhaps it commemorates John Butler (1711-36) of Amery House, late of Anstie, High Sherrif? His wife was Rebecca but her family name is as yet unidentified.

The right hand inner tombstone in the porch commemorates **Edward Rolfe** or **Relfe** (1710-34). The Parish Register records his death in 1734, with the affidavit that he was buried in woolen. His will (that of Edward Rolfe, Gentleman of Wesbrooke (*sic*), Alton) was dated 13 June 1734. It refers to property in Lenten Lane and, apart from paying his debts and also £500 to his wife, leaves everything to his sister Dorothy. The Lenten Lane property has been identified as Brooklands, 25 Lenten Street, where Mary lived at least until 1739 but had left by 1740. It soon became the home of James Curtis, father of the celebrated botanist, William Curtis, who was born there in 1746.

A more detailed version of this note, with full heraldic descriptions, is available from the author, who is greatly indebted to Jane Hurst for much of the information on the history of these Alton families.

Edward Hepper
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A short guide to the Heraldry of St Lawrence Church, Alton

St Lawrence Church in
The Parish of The Resurrection,
Alton