

## Wool Churchyard

# HISTORY TRAIL

You are welcome to take a walk around the churchyard using this guide. There is also a Nature Trail which you can follow separately ...or you can do both trails together.

### IMPORTANT - PLEASE...

- be careful not to trip over the stone monuments. In particular, watch out for low stone kerbs, partly hidden by long grass;
- don't touch or lean against tall monuments as they may topple and cause injury;
- respect the privacy of others who may be visiting the churchyard to tend loved ones' graves.

Welcome to the church and churchyard of **Holy Rood** (Church of the True Cross). The original church, part of which still stands (13<sup>th</sup> century), was originally a Chapel of Ease in the Coombe Keynes Parish and remained so until 1844 when Wool became a separate Parish. The church was added to in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries and virtually rebuilt in 1866. A substantial amount of the original church is incorporated in the structure. During the rebuild of 1866 the new south aisle was built over the graves of the **Turberville** family of Woolbridge. This family name was adapted by Thomas Hardy for "Tess of the D'Urbervilles".



Walk on down to point H1 beside the tower at the west end of the church.

### Point H1

There is a **benchmark** hole bored into the tower buttress. The bolt-hole was bored between 1840 – 1860 at the known height of 23.7991 metres above sea level. Ordnance Survey surveyors would have placed their instrumentation to exactly measure height from this point. Since the advent of GPS this type of surveying is now obsolete. The information from the benchmark database is as follows –

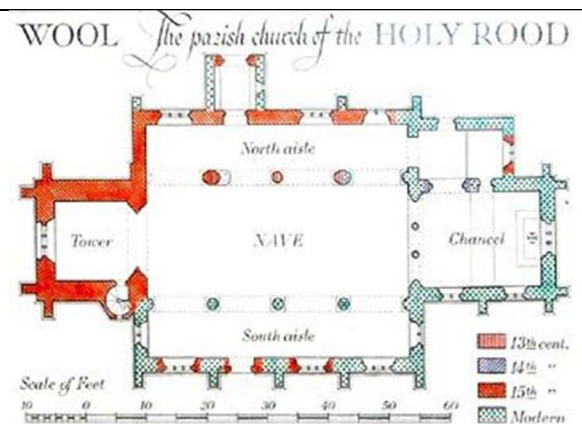
1GL Bolt: Wool, Holy Rood Church

Wool Church. Bolt in buttress at North-west corner of tower; 1.25 ft. above surface [1GL, Exeter to Southampton, Branch Levelling from Mark No. 252(b)] =?= CUT MARK: HOLY ROOD CH TWR W ANG N BUTT (ODN 23.7991m, AGL 0.3m)

### Point H2



If you look at the southwest buttress of the tower you will see some marks in the stone in the shape of a sundial. This is a **mass dial** or **scratch dial**. It probably dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century or earlier. These were used to inform the parishioners when a service in the church was due. A wooden peg would have been inserted in the hole to cast a shadow over the scratches. This one on our church was not used after the 15<sup>th</sup> century rebuild and that is why the stone was placed upside down and facing west!

Now carry on along the footpath to Point H3.



**Q:** WHAT'S THE HEIGHT OF THE CHURCH TOWER? If you stack double-decker buses one on top of another, how many would you need to equal the height of the tower? *Answer over the page...*

**A:** The church tower is 13.2m high, which is exactly the height of **three** double-decker buses. You would need to use the iconic London Routemaster buses for this experiment – they’re 14ft 4½ in (4.38m) tall!

	<p><b>Point H3</b></p> <p>At the end of the grassy path you will see the <b>war memorial</b> erected in 1921. The path leading up to the memorial is surrounded by 71 graves maintained by the War Graves Commission. These soldiers probably died at the Bovington Military Hospital, which during the Great War had 288 beds. The soldiers came from all over the UK and two were from Canada.</p> <p><i>Walk around the south side of the church to Point H4.</i></p>	
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**Point H4**

This is the gravestone of a notorious smuggler **Thomas Lucas**. He was the landlord of the Ship Inn, Wool, and handled smuggled goods from the Purbeck Coast to onward destinations. In 1827 he and his band of 60 men were involved in a fight with ten Customs Officers at St Aldhelm’s Head. Two smugglers were killed and five others detained. Lucas was eventually arrested at the Ship Inn and sent to jail. However, he was acquitted by the jury who were probably fearful of the possible consequences of a guilty verdict!!!

*Follow the path to the east end of the church, then go around the church to Point H5.*

**Point H5**

**Take care near the steps.**

Here lies the oldest visible gravestone, in memory of **Thomas Monsheer** and his wife Mary.

The gravestone reads –

**THOMAS MONSHEER BURIED THE ? DAY OF MARCH 1666**  
**MARY HIS WIFE BURIED 18 DAY OF MARCH 1680**  
**“KIND READER AS YOU ARE SO WEAR WE**  
**AS WE ARE SOE YOU SHALL BE”**

A sobering thought !

Although the church now stands on the edge of the village, it was not always so. **Church Lane** was once a busy road. A hundred yards past the church, the road reached a junction: one road to East Stoke, another through Woodstreet and into Purbeck, and yet another to Coombe Keynes, running parallel some quarter of a mile east of the present road.

*We hope you have enjoyed the History Trail.*



This Trail has been made possible by a grant from the East Stoke and Wool Community Chest.

**Please replace this Trail guide in the rack for others to use – thank you.**

Copies of the History and Nature Trails can be downloaded from our website. Comments and suggestions are very welcome. Please see noticeboard at Church Lane entrance for website and contact details.

You are welcome to look around the inside the church when not in use for Services.  
A leaflet describing the interior can be found on the table just inside the door.