



Imber is probably Old English *Imman-moere*, 'Imma's boundary or landmark' or a boundary between two local hundreds.

The church occupies the site of an earlier building dating from the mid-12th century. The nave was rebuilt towards the end of the 13th century and was followed, c.1400, by the addition of the north and south aisles, the tower and north porch. At this time the nave roof was reconstructed. In 1849 the chancel was rebuilt and the north-east vestry added.

The church served the inhabitants of Imber until the evacuation of the village in 1943 to facilitate training of American troops for the D-Day landings. The village has remained in military occupation ever since. The civil parish of Imber was abolished in 1991.

During the early 1950s the church was stripped of its fittings and furnishings which were distributed among other churches. In 1960 a proposal to move the church to Warminster Garrison was quashed. The Grade I building remains whilst much of the village has disappeared. The churchyard remains the responsibility of the parish of Edington with Imber.

In 2002 the Ministry of Defence ended its undertaking to maintain the church and churchyard, causing the building to be declared redundant. It was vested in The Churches Conservation Trust in September 2005. During the ensuing four years extensive repairs were carried out to the masonry, roofs, drainage, windows and wall paintings.

The church is open during periods of public access to the village. An annual service is held in September and a carol concert at Christmas.



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We need your help to protect historic churches for the future. Please give generously. Thank you.

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St Giles' Church

Imber, Wiltshire

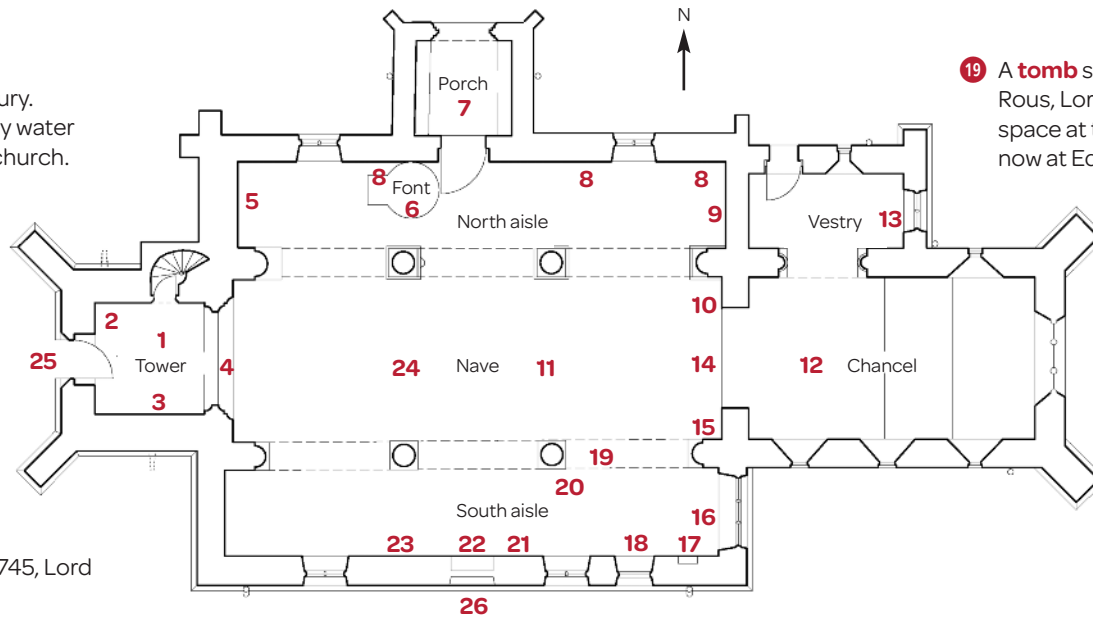
A walk round guide



- The five **bells** were removed from the tower in 1950. Only the third bell dated 1721 survives in the ring of ten bells at Edington.
- The **plain changes** on five bells are dated 1692.
- Here hung the **royal arms** of Charles I (1639) now at Edington.
- Closing the tower from the nave is a **wooden screen**. Above and in front of the screen stood the **musicians' gallery** removed in 1895.
- The **war memorial** records those from Imber who served during the First World War (1914–18).
- The Norman **font** is now at Brixton Deverill. The 19th-century base remains in situ.
- The porch walls bear **graffiti** from the 17th century. The **stoup** to the right of the door contained holy water for the spiritual cleansing of those entering the church. Above this is a carved rose, balanced on the other side of the door by the arms of Walter, First Lord Hungerford, a 15th-century Lord of the Manor.
- The 15th-century **paintings** form two main subjects: on the left of the door Avarice from the Seven Deadly Sins; on the right the weighing of souls. Traces of the Lord's Prayer can be seen on the right of this painting. To the right of the window a decorative border is visible. In 1849 the Reformation covering of limewash was removed from the paintings.
- A finely executed **memorial** to John Wadman, 1745, Lord of the Manor.



- The 17th-century **pulpit** is now at Winterbourne Earls church.
- The 17th-century box pews were removed in 1849 and replaced with benches, one of which is dated 1631. Most of the benches went to the church of St Bartholomew, Churchdown, Gloucestershire. Two examples of restored original **benches** are in the nave.
- The **chancel** was rebuilt in 1849. The contemporary **altar and rail** are now at Bratton; the choir stalls at Winterbourne Gunner church. The present altar is from Erlestoke Prison chapel.



- The 13th-century stone **piscina** was for the cleansing of the vessels used for Holy Communion.
- The 17th-century **oval window** provided light for the squire's pew removed in 1895. Beneath this window and set under a stone canopy was a 14th-century **tomb** bearing an effigy with cross-legs in chain mail and surcoat, probably to a member of the Rous family.

- A **tomb** similar to that above bears the arms of Sir John Rous, Lord of Imber, who died in 1412. This occupied the space at the east end of the nave arcade. Both tombs are now at Edington.
- The nave arcades are decorated with a 13th-century **chequerboard pattern** embellished with flowers, tendrils and small quatrefoils. Look for the **cartoon** of a human figure in the painted marbling at the spring of the arch on the east side of the arcade.
- The 18th-century wall **tablet** to Thomas Ayliff remains unfinished. The lettering was marked out but not cut.
- Although now blocked the south **doorway** retains its unusual inner stone frame.
- The brass **plaque** records the restoration of the nave and tower in 1896.

- Medieval stone **heads** of a king and bishop above the vestry east window are probably from a window in the former medieval chancel.
- Ledger slabs** in the nave floor commemorate Sarah Harris who died in 1663 and John Wadman who died in 1688.
- The eagle **lectern** commemorates the Revd William Dyer (d. 1872), vicar of Imber for 24 years.
- Fragments of medieval **stained glass**, formerly in the tracery lights of the east window, and the 17th-century **communion table** which stood beneath it are now at Edington.

- Until the 1950s the nave and aisle **roofs** were plastered. A wooden **boss** of a bishop can be seen at the apex of the nave roof above the westernmost tie beam.
- The **tower** of Corsham stone, was under construction in 1400. It is finely executed and has the rare distinction of five **pinnacles** – the fifth above the stair turret.
- The old south **door** remains in situ although the doorway behind it is blocked.
- On the east wall is the **hood mould** of a window obscured by the building of the vestry in 1849.