

## The North Aisle information



The north aisle was built by a local wealthy clothier named John Stokys, or Stokes, who died in 1498 and is commemorated, with his wife Alice (d.1500) in small brasses under the west window. The original brasses were stolen a few years ago and although recovered, have been substituted by resin copies. Note also in the arch of the west window carved shears on one side and the virgin Mary with Christ on the other. The outside arch of this window also has carved into it a pair of shears and a pair of scissors, strong references to the wool trade which created wealth for those associated with it and who paid for the embellishment and decoration of this church and others in the area – notably that of St Mary's, Steeple Ashton.

The old altar-table near the door was removed from the church in 1788 and kept by a succession of Parish Clerks belonging to the related families of Somner and Wiltshire, the last of whom restored it to the church in 1918. The font at the east end was made in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to replace the ancient one now restored at the west end of the nave. The windows, with their characteristic perpendicular tracery, originally contained 15<sup>th</sup> century glass, including pictures of some of the Stokes children, but it was 'beaten down' by William Somner about 1648 – this according to John Aubrey (an English antiquarian and writer March 12, 1626 - June, 1697) who knew the building in the 1660s and met Somner "in an ill hour" in 1664!

The windows and wall-tablets are mainly dedicated to the families of the Schombergs' and Ludlow Bruges'. These families, along with the Awdrys', built



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and owned most of the big houses in the village from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Look also for the 'squint' or hagioscope hewn into the column dividing the chancel from the nave. This was to enable the worshippers to see the priest celebrating mass at the high altar when the rood screen existed. There is a perspex screen part way through to try and eliminate the draught to the choir stalls!

