

FLEET AIR ARM MEMORIAL CHURCH TIMELINE

900AD - 1066	The first church is built on the site by the Saxons.
1066 - 1154	The Saxon church is rebuilt on the existing site using local Lias stone with Hamstone dressings by the Normans but later destroyed by fire.
1200s	The Nave of the present church is built in the late 13 th Century.
1272 - 1282	Sir William of Yeovilton grants the church to Montacute Priory who then sell it to Robert Burnell, the Bishop of Bath and Wells. The church eventually becomes part of the Diocese of Bath and Wells.
1300s	The Chancel of the present church is built in the early 14 th Century.
1400s	A substantial fire destroys the majority of the Norman church. A small amount of masonry survives and once again the church is rebuilt. The present perpendicular octagonal font is made for the church.
1435	The first (36.25" diameter) of the six bells is made in Exeter. This bell is known as the Maria Bell.
Circa 1500	The three stage tower is added with a legacy in 1486 from the Rector, Richard Swan.
1591	The 'Fifth' bell (40.13" diameter) is cast by Robert Wiseman of Montacute.
1628	A bell (30.50" diameter) is installed cast by Perdues of Closworth.
1775	The Gallery is fitted.
1795	The original 'Tenor' bell is made by George Bailey of Bridgwater.
1820	The 'Third' bell (33" diameter) is supplied by John Kingston of Bridgwater.
1871/1872	The Victorians largely rebuild the south wall and the South Vestry (now the Fleet Air Arm Memorial Chapel) is added. The Gallery is removed, the Belfry is opened into the church and the Tower roof replaced. The Wagon Roof is also refurbished during this extensive restoration and the current pews are installed. A new Pulpit and Reading Desk are added. The 'Tenor' bell (43.25" diameter) is recast by Petter of Yeovil.
1940 - 1942	Fourteen victims of aircraft accidents and one Army Private are buried in the churchyard from the adjacent and newly commissioned Air Station (HMS Heron).
1942	A Royal Naval Cemetery, bought by the Ministry of Defence, on the southern boundary is opened.
1961	The church is awarded Grade II* Listed Building status on 19 April, a designation that means it is particularly important and of more than special historical interest.
1988	Much of the church structure becomes unsafe making it redundant under the Pastoral Measures Act and it is left to fall into a state disrepair.
1990	A Declaration of Trust is formed on 19 November for the purpose of raising enough public funds to restore St Bartholomew's to use as the Fleet Air Arm Memorial Church.

1992	<p>The church is purchased for £1 from the Diocese of Bath and Wells by the newly formed Trust on behalf of the Royal Navy. The fund raising campaign begins for the £300,000 needed to restore the church. Major renovations and alterations commence under the project management of Frank Taylor.</p> <p>The Palembang Memorial Stone, carved by Thomas Topham, is laid in the Nave floor.</p>
1993	<p>The 'Treble' bell (29" diameter) is forged at the Whitechapel Foundry and gifted by the Royal Naval Guild of Bell Ringers. All six bells are hung on a new metal mounting below the original medieval frame.</p> <p>Saint Bartholomew's is dedicated as the Fleet Air Arm Memorial Church on 11 November.</p>
1995	<p>The Fleet Air Arm Roll of Honour is dedicated on 10 November.</p>
2000	<p>Improvements are made to the ringing chamber, including the removal of the old ladder access and the opening up of a doorway onto the turret stairs.</p> <p>The steps from the pavement to the north Porch are removed and a new path and retaining wall are laid.</p>
2001	<p>The modern 'Resurrection Light' stained glass window, made by John Yeo to replace the drab 100 year old east window, is blessed on Easter Day by Bishop Michael Ball CGA.</p> <p>An extension to the Royal Naval Cemetery is purchased by the Ministry of Defence and landscaped through the generosity of Sir Donald Gosling.</p> <p>The 15th Century font is relined by kind donation from the Eastbourne Fleet Air Arm Association.</p> <p>A stone statue of Saint Bartholomew, privately commissioned, is installed in its original inverted niche at the north base of the Tower.</p> <p>The old Fleet Air Arm Queen's Colour (1956) is relocated from Saint Augustine's Church on the Air Station (HMS Heron) and laid up in the side Chapel.</p>
2002	<p>A new Sanctuary Lamp and Baptismal Ewer is presented by former members of 809 and 835 Naval Air Squadrons.</p> <p>The stone Wayside Shrine and Armillary Sphere is added in the Royal Naval Cemetery extension by private donation.</p> <p>The National Fleet Air Arm Association's old Colour is laid up in the side Chapel on 4 September.</p>
2009	<p>A brass plaque dedicated to four winners of the Naval Aviation Victoria Cross is mounted on the south Nave wall.</p> <p>A new polished Blue Lias stone floor is laid in the Chancel.</p> <p>The medieval Mensa is raised from below the Chancel floor to serve as the altar top.</p>
2010	<p>A new sound system is fitted in the Chancel and Nave.</p>
2021	<p>To mark the centenary, a plaque remembering the Royal Naval Air Service men killed in WWI is placed in the side Chapel.</p> <p>The Priest's Door in the southern Chancel wall is opened up and a bespoke oak door is hung during the Spring.</p>