

**YCCCART 2019/Y20**

**Kingston Seymour church**

**Part 1 - History**

**YATTON, CONGRESBURY, CLAVERHAM AND CLEEVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH  
TEAM (YCCCART)**

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*An early 20<sup>th</sup> century post card of the church.*

## **Introduction**

All Saints' church is set among mature trees and is almost surrounded by water. It is an idyllic place. The Domesday Book tells us that Alvrice was a priest here during the reign of Edward the Confessor.

## **YCCART**

Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team (YCCART) is one of a number of Community Archaeology teams across northern Somerset, formerly supported by the North Somerset Council Development Management Team. Our objective is to undertake archaeological fieldwork to enable a better understanding and management of the heritage of the area while recording and publishing the activities and locations of the research carried out. For more information please visit <http://www.yccart.co.uk/>

## **Acknowledgements**

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**June 2019**

## Contents

	Page
A brief history	3
Rectors of Kingston Seymour	13
Sources	20

***Please see the separate documents***

**Inside the church**

**Outside the church**

## A brief history



*The picture above dates to the time when the Rev David Williams was incumbent (1820-1850). Note the path south of the cross.*

## Domesday

The Domesday Book of 1086 has two entries for Kingston. During the reign of Edward the Confessor one portion was held by Eldred and the other by four thanes — Siward, Saeric, Saewulf and Aelfric a priest. After the Conquest the Bishop of Coutances granted both portions to William de Monceaux. During the reign of Richard 1st the lordship was assigned to Milo de Sancto Mauro, thus Kingston acquired its second name.

All trace of Aelfric's church has disappeared.

There was a Norman church here for the base of the font inside the church door has been dated 12th century.

## 13<sup>th</sup> century

The piscina and seat in the chancel date to this period.

## 14<sup>th</sup> century

The tower and spire and chancel arch perhaps date to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, which is also the date of the outer arch of the current re-sited porch.

## **15<sup>th</sup> century**

A period of great change as follows:

Two new Perpendicular windows were inserted on the south wall and two similar windows on the east and west walls. When the old windows were taken out of the north wall some two feet of masonry was added to accommodate the new larger Perpendicular windows.

The south aisle was also added with the piscina in south aisle and squint.

A four-bay south aisle arcade was built.

The nave roof was added as was the parapet to the tower.

The tower stairway was extended giving access to the top of tower. You can see the contrasting masonry.

Following the structural changes a new two-storey porch was built.

## **16<sup>th</sup> century**

Pevsner considers the delicate niche on the north arch in the chancel to be late Perpendicular but the corbelled base and angel above 19<sup>th</sup> century. (The Perpendicular style dates from the late 14<sup>th</sup> century to the middle 16<sup>th</sup> century).

## **17<sup>th</sup> century**

The church has a sweet toned peal of six, the tenor weighing just over 17cwt. The three oldest bells were cast by "Roger and George Purdue of Bristol" in 1632. (See the document *Inside the church* for more details on the bells)

### ***Great flood 1606***

***1636 it is recorded that: The most cruel trespassers to these shores were the infadels, an Algerian pirate crew, who landed here in 1636 to carry off some parishioners of Kingston Seymour into slavery."***

## **18<sup>th</sup> century**

***In 1703 there was a great storm in which a chimney stack fell on Bishop Kidder (Bishop of Bath and Wells) and his wife killing both. Kingston Seymour parish records record: "November ye 27<sup>th</sup> ensuing ye inhabitants sustained great loss of Cattle Sheep and Corn with many mows both of Corn and hay, the violent tempest breaking down , the Sea-Banks let in the Salt-Water. "***

***The records show that the introduction of Window Tax was publicised in 1726 in Kingston Seymour in a most unusual manner way: "Pd for singing ye window's tax rate 1 shilling."***

***The 1779 churchwarden accounts record the drowning of a child:  
Paid for Taking up the Child at Sea 6s  
Pd Honer Millard for Drink to Bury her Child 1s  
Pd for a Chest for the Boy 5s  
Pd for Victuals and Drink for Burying the Boy 6s***

***And in 1789: "Paid the Ringers when Admiral Nelson gained Victory over the French  
10s 6d"***

## **19<sup>th</sup> century**

The Bristol Mercury and Western Counties Advertiser for November 4<sup>th</sup> 1865 records:

### **RE-OPENING OF KINGSTON SEYMOUR CHURCH.**

On Tuesday a large number of the parishioners and the clergy of the neighbouring districts celebrated in a most cordial manner the re-opening of Kingston Seymour parish church, which during the past five or six months has undergone a complete renovation, under the supervision of Messrs Popes and Bindon, the well-known architects of Bristol.

The event is another instance of what large sums of money are now devoted by both Churchmen and Dissenters to restoring or building places of worship.

The work of restoration, which has been creditably done by Mr. R. H. Trickey, builder of Banwell, has cost about £1100, of which the parishioners have given £400, and the rector, the Rev, G. S. O. Piggott, who undertook the expense of the alterations in the chancel, guaranteed the rest of the amount.

The church formerly consisted of nave, north aisle, and chancel, and on the south\* side of the latter there have now been added an organ chamber and a vestry. The old stone work of the nave and aisle has been cleaned and dressed, and the aisle has a new ceiling; the old high pews have been removed, and open oak and stained deal sittings placed in their stead.

An ornamental glazed screen bar been placed underneath the tower arch, and a new stone screen underneath the chancel arch. There is a new pulpit of Bath stone; it is Gothic octangular in form, and richly carved. There is a new lectern, and the nave and aisle are furnished with illuminated gaseliers, supplied by Cox, of London.

The east end of the church is adorned with a handsome memorial-window to a member of the Piggott family. The chief scene is the Crucifixion, which is the centre light; it was made by Warrington, of London.

The chancel contains open oak-benches for the clergy and choir, and has been furnished with a sedilia and credence-table of stone, the latter the gift of Mr. Pope. It has also a carved and diaper reredos, over which is the inscription, " Whosoever eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life," It was carved by Margetson, of Bristol. The chancel roof, which is also new, is supported by carved figures of angels.

The church has been furnished with a new organ in place of the old harmonium. It was built by Allen, of Bristol.

A very pretty corona hangs in the centre of the chancel, The altar-cloth was worked by Mrs, Piggott.

The west window, which is of stained glass and contains the terms of the Piggott family, was the gift of Mr. Trickey, the builder.

The church in its present state will seat upwards of 300 persons.

The plastering which covered the outside walls has been removed, and the walls pointed, thus giving the exterior quite a new and attractive appearance.

Throughout the whole of the renovation the old work has been preserved as much as possible, and even the seat ends of the new sittings have been copied from the old pews. The centre of the chancel and the nave have been paved with encaustic tiles, and the whole of the work is deserving of praise, while the vastly-improved appearance of the church must fully compensate the rector, the church wardens, and the parishioners for the praiseworthy efforts they have made in bringing their undertaking to a successful completion.

*\* should be north*

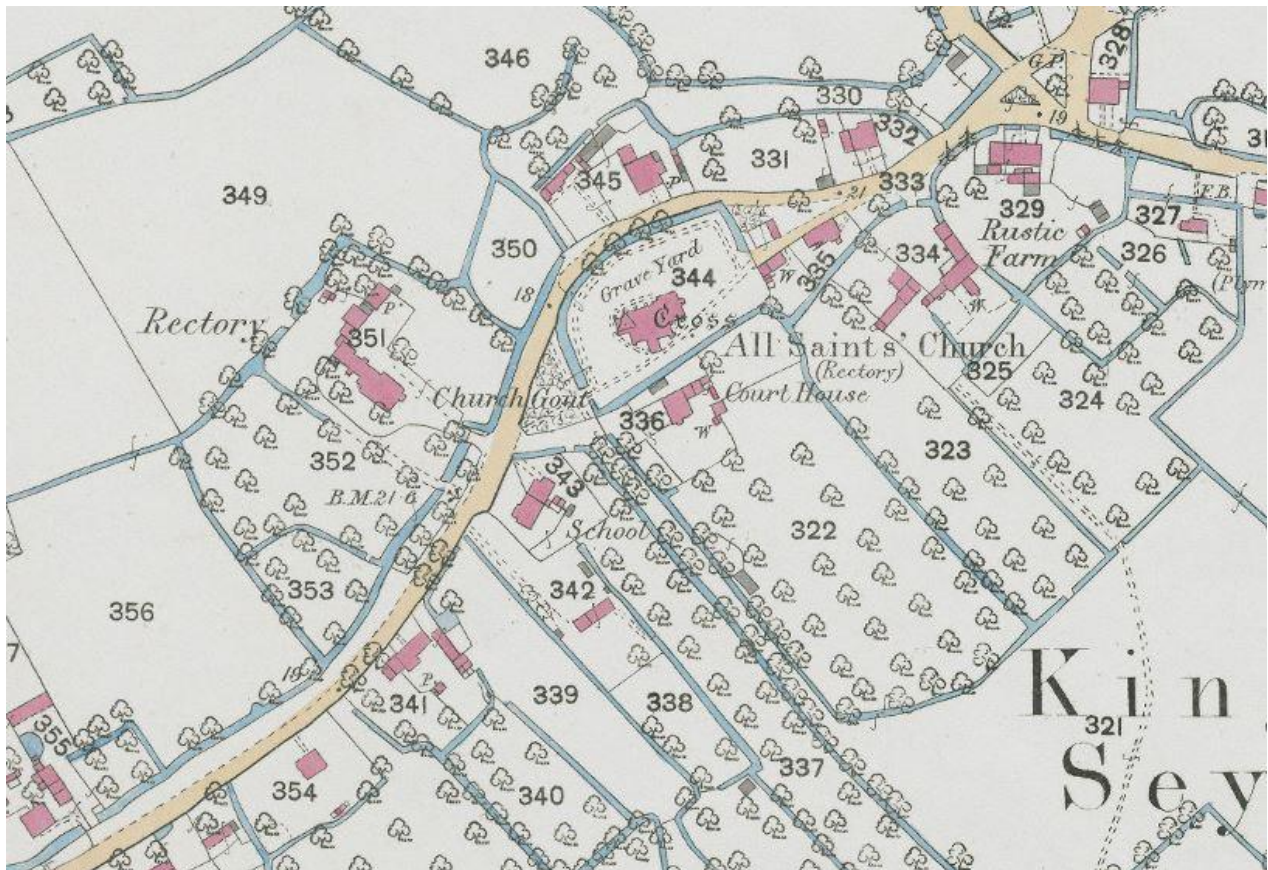
***The churchwarden accounts show that there must have been some crime in the village:***

***"1806 Pd for Putting up ther Whiping cross***

***1828 To a pair of Handcuffs***

***1828 To a Constables staff"***





*Ordnance Survey Map 1844-88 The map shows the church (number 344) almost completely surrounded by water.*



*The church in 1843*



The Weston super Mare Gazette of 1<sup>st</sup> September 1894 records:

A LYNCH GATE has been erected at the entrance of the churchyard at Kingston Seymour, by the widow and family of the late rector. The posts, seat and gate are of English oak, and the roof is covered with Bro-cley tiles. In a panel a brass plate is affixed bearing the inscription "In the reverence of God this lynch gate is dedicated to the memory of George Octavius Smyth-Pigott, 37 years rector of this parish, who died January 24<sup>th</sup> 1892, aged 64, after a life of faith, hope and charity." Messrs Cowlin and Son, of Bristol were the architects and builders.



*An early photo of the lynch gate*

## **20th century**

Further restoration took place in 1905 -1906 when the nave wagon roof was renewed and repaired. Some of the original wood and bosses were re-used.



Bell ringers circa 1908.

Top, left to right: Harry Parsons, Unknown, William J. Smith.

Seated, left to right: William Scribbins, Unknown, Herbert W. Price.

The photo was handed down through the family of school master Mr James Smith whose son William J. Smith is pictured above. Mr James Smith was closely associated with raising hundreds of pounds for the 1905/6 restoration

The 1908 photo was probably taken when the bells (at that time 5 not 6) were rehung in a steel frame by Messrs Llewellins and James of Castlegreen, Bristol at a cost of £175. At the same time a new chiming apparatus was also installed

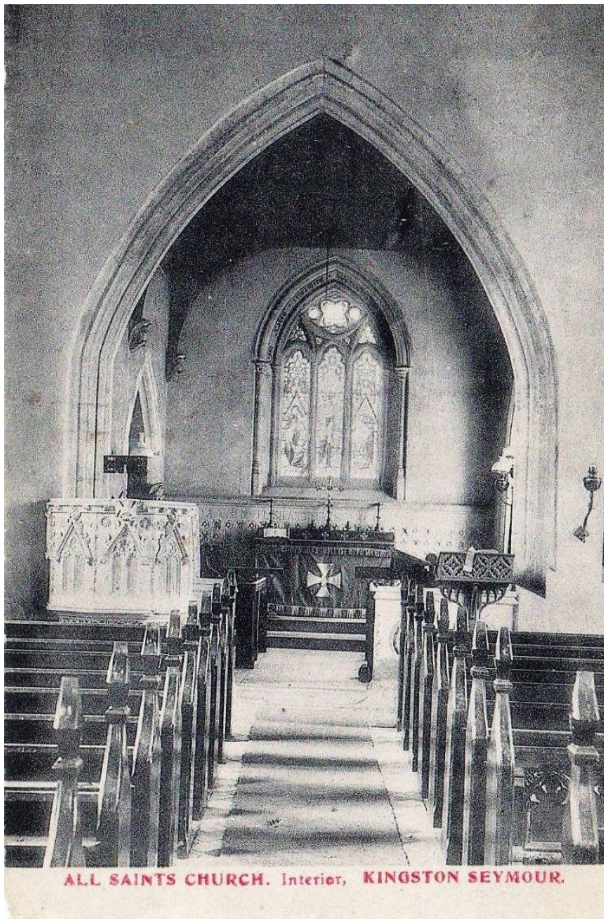
The bells were retuned in 1952.

In 1969 a new and larger organ incorporating many of the older pipes was installed at the rear of the church. Percy Daniel & Co undertook the work which cost £1200.

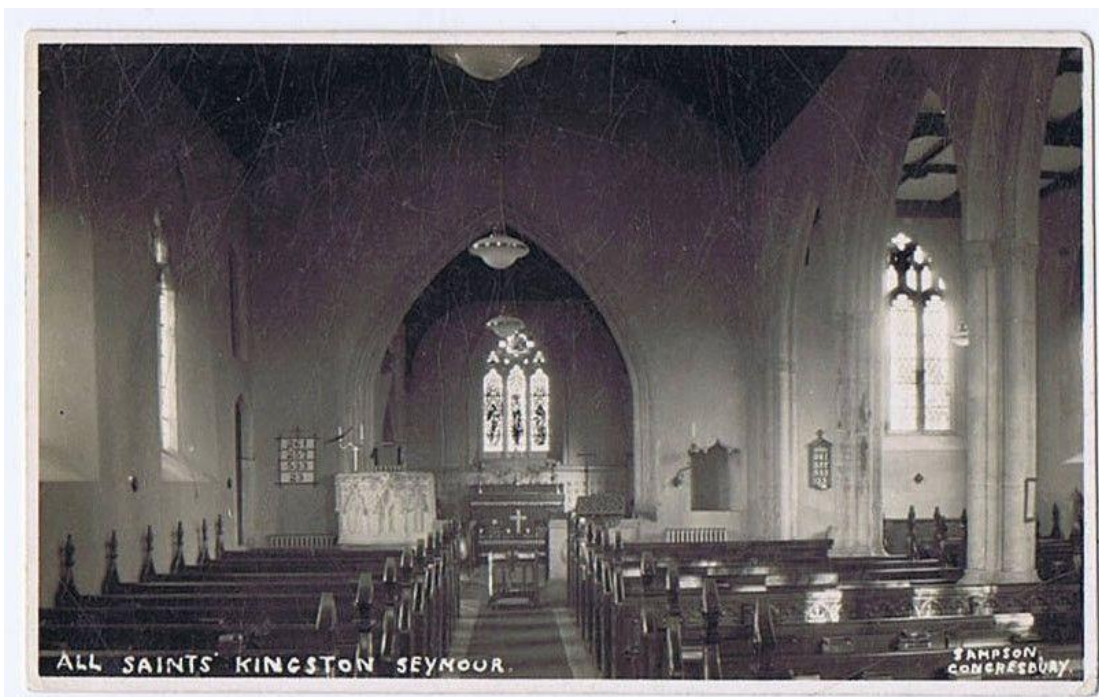


*Rev Green with the new treble bell installed in 1930 to commemorate his appointment as Rector after 25 years as Curate in Charge. The bell cost £88 14s.*





*Internal views. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century postcards*



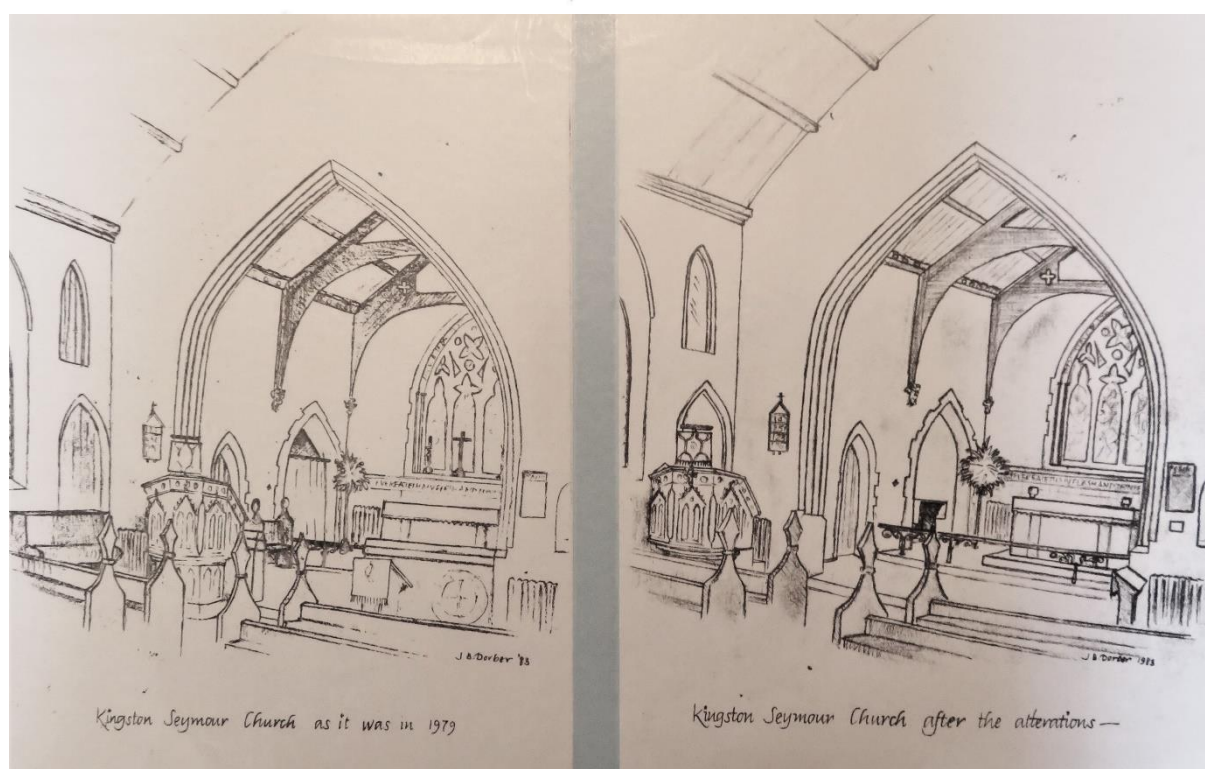
AE Harris in a previous guide to the church recorded that during the first quarter of 1980 extensive alterations and re-ordering of the chancel was made. The late Eleanor Gertrude Bate made this possible and wished it in memory of the Rev M R Green.

The restoration included removal of the low free-stone at the entrance and re-siting of the pulpit to its current position (This exposed more of the old arch). In addition a new floor was laid, choir stalls removed and the altar together with the altar rails moved forward and new carpet laid. Also the archway to the original organ chamber was filled in.

The entire church was also redecorated, new lights installed and the south aisle ceiling painted blue.

The work was carried out by voluntary members and non-members of the church at a cost of £2475.

During these alterations the stairway to the rood loft was discovered as well as the entrance to a possible medieval sacristy. This archway has been filled in leaving the outline of the arch which can be seen in the north wall to the left of the pulpit.



*Sketches showing before and after the 1980 work.*

## **21 Century**

***The Weston Mercury in January 2018 reported that: "Last June, Kingston Seymour's graded I - listed All Saints' Church saw lead worth £15,000 stolen from its roof – a crime described as 'very distressing' to the congregation of the 14th century church".***

All Saints Church is now one of five village churches looked after by Yatton Moor Team Ministry, a Training Parish within the Diocese of Bath and Wells.



## Rectors of Kingston Seymour

# Rectors of Kingston Seymour.

Instituted.

Peter De Hermere	1272
Henry De Rolling	1293
Hugh De Pentris	1307
Will De Meleborn	1321
Richard De La More	1324
Nicholas De Bromlegh	1332
Aylmer De Botiler	1338

Nigel Hamme	1409
William Bodenham	1420
Roger Elmeley	1440
Thomas Nyckyns	1462
Robert Browne	1498
James Fitz James	1528
Walter Gretyng	1541
John Snowe	1558
Robert Godwin	1589
John Seaward	1616
Hugh Cox	1660
Christopher Coward	1668
Martin Sanford	1669
James Tuthill	1727

William Tudor	1780
David Williams	1820
John Hawtrey	1850
Geo. O. Smyth-Pigott	1854
Geo. Herbert Smyth-Pigott	1892
Major Rev. R. Green (Curate in Charge)	1905
Rector	1930

Harold Arthur Cottrell	1935
Frank Howarth Cornall	1938
Percy William Rees Rowlands	1946
Rural Dean of Portishead	1956
Prebendary of Wells Cathedral	1958

Trevor Wright	1966
Frank Stevens	1967
Neil MacGregor	1974
Richard Ackworth	1981
John Gordon Pollock	1982
John Leslie Ruffle	1984
John Jeremy Cruse	1991

Team Vicar	
Ian Maxwell Hubbard	1998
Rural Dean of Portishead	2002

Rectors of Kingston Seymour	
John Colin Andrews	2002
Team Vicar	
Prebendary of Wells Cathedral	2004
James Clanfair Warren Williams	
Parish Priest	2013

The Rectors of the church were transcribed by the Rev W Griffin. A few additions have been made to his notes as follows.

*N.B. The patron or patrons of the benefice are given permission to present the chosen candidate to the benefice, the bishop then admits the candidate to the benefice and institutes them.*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>		<b>Presentation by</b>
Period from 1272 to before 1279 to -1290	Peter de Hermere	The first Rector of whom we have any record is in 1279 when Edward III rd was King. Peter died in April 1290 and then followed litigation about the next presentation.	Walter de Wengham together with his wife Maud, daughter of Peter de Sancto Mauro
1290 to 1293	Unknown		
1293	Henry de Rolling	The heirs of Maud de Wengham obtained a writ of election to the Bishop in 1292 presumably on the death or resignation of the last incumbent.	Co-presenters John de Wengham (Guardian of John Kenn and Joan de Wengham who were betrothed but under age.) and John and Alice de Wyke of Court de Wyke in Claverham.
1307 or 1308	Hugh de Pentris	He was a succentor at Wells (assistant to the precentor, helping with the preparation and conduct of the liturgy including psalms, preces and responses Also at Wells he held a canonry and was a bursar. Not constantly resident at Kingston Seymour.	Presented by the Bishop in consequence of further litigation
1321	Will de Meleborne		Thomas Earl of Lancaster, guardian of John de Kenn
1324	Richard de la More (or Morte)	Inducted by the Archdeacon of Bath. In February 1329 he was granted a special licence to study. He resigned in 1333.	The king
1332	Nicholas de Bromlegh	Clerk. He later became subdeacon.	Sir John de Bowden knight.
1338	Almeric (or Aylmer) de Botiler	In the year he was appointed he was granted a year to study at Oxford and later another year.	Not recorded

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>		<b>Presentation by</b>
1409	Nigel Hamme	Died in 1420.	
1420	William Bodenham	In 1422 the Bishop granted him a dispensation to attend schools or the University of Oxford or elsewhere for one year.	Thomas Norton the elder of Bristol
1440	Roger Elmeley	Vicar of Corston in 1454 (resigned 1455).	Alicia Ken & Tomopath of Kingston
1462	Thomas Hycktns	Instituted on March 24 <sup>th</sup> 1462.	Maurice Berkeley
1498	Robert Browne	Upon death of Thomas Hycktns.	Thomas Norton of Bristol
1528	James FitzJames	Doctor of Sacred Theology.	John Ken the patron
1541	Walter Grettyng or Crettyng	Doctor of Laws. He held 3 livings at the same time. South Brent from 1529, Huntspill from 1533 and Kingston Seymour from 1541 to 1556.	Henry 8 <sup>th</sup>
1558	John Snowe	Instituted 12 November 1558 on the death of Walter Crettyng.	John Redman
1589	Robert Godwin	Master of Arts	Unknown
1613	Frank Godwin	Instituted 27 July 1613 following death of Robert Godwin. Recorded as being Bishop of Llandaff.	Thom. Maicock, a. c. per Eliz Bowerman, widow
1616	John Seward or Seaward	Master of Arts. Instituted October 28 <sup>th</sup> 1616 Frank Godwin having resigned.	Unknown
1620	Hugh or Hugo Cox	Master of Arts. Instituted on June 26 <sup>th</sup> 1660*. Instituted the Rector of Brockley in 1642. Held both livings until his death in 1668.	Will Buck, gent
1668	Christopher Coward	Instituted April 24 1668. He was instituted Rector of Ditchheat 1667.	Lord Poulet (John) of Hinton St George.
1699	Martin Sanford	Master of Arts. Instituted June 6 <sup>th</sup> 1699. The existing Churchwarden accounts commenced during his incumbency.	Arthur Lacy, gent
1727	James Tuthill	Master of Arts The registers of christenings, marriages and burials commence with his incumbency. The first entry in the registers under burials was his predecessor Martin Sandford	

Date	Name		Presentation by
		Richard Tuthill (probably his brother) was Curate.	
1780	William Tudor	Born 1754.	Unknown
1820	David Williams	Also Rector of Bleadon, near Weston super Mare. He rode on horseback to Kingston Seymour once a Sunday to take a service. He was instituted in 1820 and died in 1850. As well as being a sportsman and learned theologian, he was a valued member of various antiquarian and geological bodies.	J. H Smyth Pigott of Brockley Hall (Lord of the Manor of Weston super Mare
1850	John Hawtrey	Served in the Dragoons and had gone on to preach and lecture at Holy Trinity church at Windsor, where, it was said, "he had won the esteem and affection of the Royal household cavalry."	
1854	George Octavius Smyth Pigott	His relatives were lord of the Manor and therefore patrons. Died 1 24 <sup>th</sup> January 1892. The lynch gate is erected in his memory. He and his wife did much good in the parish.	Trustees of the Pigott Estates
1892	George Herbert Smyth Pigott	<p>Succeeded his father. His first wife Ada Elizabeth Empson died in childbirth. He married Kate Louise Lancelot, a member of his domestic staff but they frequently quarrelled. Was his later behaviour the result of this? He fell out with parishioners and rode his bike around the village (it was said) cursing all he met. His duties were neglected as well as the church building (for a while access to the church was hindered by briars that had grown up around the door).</p> <p>Congregation attendances fell and for six years there was no Sunday school.</p> <p>In March 1905 in the Assembly Rooms Yatton an Ecclesiastical Commission met to review the sad situation. It was reported that the rector had altercations with the Bishop, schoolmaster and organist. There had been no Vestry meetings for six years or churchwardens.</p> <p>The result of this was that he was never allowed to officiate at services but still retained the title Rector and received an annual income of £400 to £500 from which he paid a curate Revd M. R. Green only part of this (initially £60) to officiate.</p>	

Date	Name		Presentation by
		George Herbert Smyth Pigott moved to Weston Super Mare and died in 1929 in Bournemouth.	



*William Scribbins with his enormous stick and (right) with his wife.*

A witness at the Ecclesiastical Commission was William Scribbins

He was born in 1858 and died in 1945 and had 5 children. A farm hand in the village all his working life he was at Rookery Farm for 50 years. Old William or Old Brown was a well-known figure at Yatton market

All his life he loved the church and was clerk and sexton for 42 years. William was also a bellringer for 71 years and still captain when he died. As a chorister he wore a special surplice with a couple of buttons in the front which enabled him to adjust his massive beard.

He was much loved.

The Ecclesiastical Commission reported that he said *"There were now three or four at the church but he had known 12 or 13, but not, people living in the parish. There were four in the morning of October 30th, including himself and another little boy, (laughter)... He had known sermons one, two, or three minutes and sometimes ten. There was no choir now only the one little boy (laughter). ..The roof of the church let the wet through and there were pools there last Sunday"*.



Date	Name		Presentation by
1905 Curate in Charge.  Rector 1930	Major Revel Raynor Green	A farmers son from Wellington. Appointed Curate in Charge he became Rector in 1930 when inducted by the Archdeacon of Bath A new treble bell installed in 1930 to commemorate his appointment as Rector after 25 years as Curate in Charge. Near the organ on the north wall is a plaque to the Rev R R Green erected after he died in 1934 and in whose memory the electric light was installed in the church.	Presented by the University of Oxford because the Smyth Pigott heir at Brockley Hall had become Catholic
1935	Harold Arthur Cottrell	University of Durham L Th (Licence in Theology) 1923. Royal Navy Chaplain HMS Furious 1925-1927 HMS Carlisle 1927-1928 HMS Vindictive and Cumberland, 1928.	Oxford University
1938	Frank Howarth Gornall	Victoria University of Manchester. B.Sc 1896, M.Sc 1903.	Oxford University
1946	Percy William Rees Rowlands	A member of the Bush Brotherhood of New South Wales Australia (A group of Anglican religious orders providing itinerant priests to minister to sparsely-settled rural districts in Australia. They were described as a "band of men" who could "preach like Apostles" and "ride like cowboys (Wiki) Rural Dean of Portishead 1956 Prebendary of Wells cathedral 1958 Retired October 31 <sup>st</sup> 1966.	Oxford University
1966	Trevor Wright	M.A. St Johns College, Durham Chaplain HM Forces (Army) 1939-44. Appointed Curate in Charge of Kingston Seymour in addition to Kenn November 1 <sup>st</sup> 1966, the benefice of Kingston Seymour being suspended.	
1967	Frank Stevens		
1974	Neil MacGregor		
1981	Richard Ackworth		
1982	John Gordon Pollock		
1984	John Leslie Ruffle		
1991	John Jeremy Cruse	Team Vicar	
1998	Ian Maxwell Hubbard	Rural Dean of Portishead 2002	



<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>		<b>Presentation by</b>
2002	John Colin Andrews	Team Vicar.2004. Prebendary of Wells Cathedral	
2013	James Clanfair Warren Williams	Parish Priest	
2019	Tim Scott	Yatton Moor Team Ministry	

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