

## Malmesbury Market Cross

Malmesbury's Market Cross stands in the centre of the town at the north end of the High Street and south west of adjacent Malmesbury Abbey. It has been used as shelter from the elements by generations, it has been painted by countless artists including Turner and it has been damaged by trucks and bin lorries. Unusually there has been little detailed research around such an important structure. This paper aims to bring together the different sources of information on the Market Cross, it will examine its architecture and iconography, its history and links to the Abbey and investigate other similar structures in England. Through the range of sources the aim is to better understand key questions such as when was it built, who paid for its construction and how has it survived?



What is a market cross?

First some definitions, according to Rimmer (1875) market crosses originated in towns where there was a monastic establishment. A monk was sent to preach to local people and it was also a central point for collecting tolls from those selling within town limits. The original form was a tall shaft on steps, a covering was added later to some crosses to provide shelter.

Until 1223 a Saturday market was in held Malmesbury partly within and partly outside a graveyard, presumably that of St. Pauls. After this it was held in the "New Market" perhaps the area within the Abbey precinct where the current cross was built (Wiltshire C. C. 1999). Rimmer believes that it was Abbott William de Colerne, who died in 1296, built a market cross although there no remains have ever been documented. It seems most likely that Malmesbury Market Cross, on its current site was built in the form that we see today.

Architecture

The architectural assessment is based on an examination of the Market Cross as it stands today. It was Grade I listed by what is now Historic England, in 1949 and the listing is described in appendix 1.

Nikolas Pevsner's Buildings of England describes it as "One of the finest in England. Built around 1500. Octagonal, 41ft. high. Four centred arches. Spandrels with leaves. Battlements. Flying buttresses carry a kind of lantern with statuettes of saints and the Crucifixion. Inside a tierceron vault". (Pevsner 1963, p327).

This style of architecture is known as Perpendicular characterised by pronounced verticals, tracery and complex van vaults. Architectural elements from the listing are shown below.



Image Historic England 2020

Foliate spandrels - a triangular space between the top of an arch filled with decorative leaf carving.



Flying buttresses - masonry structure typically consisting of an inclined bar carried on a half arch that extends ("flies") from the upper part of a wall to a pier some distance away and carries the thrust of a roof or vault (Britannia 2020).  
Cyma moulded is moulding of double curvature

Crocketed pinnacles - A crocket is a stylized carving of curled leaves, buds or flowers used at regular intervals to decorate the sloping edges of a pinnacle (vertical ornament of pyramidal or conical shape).

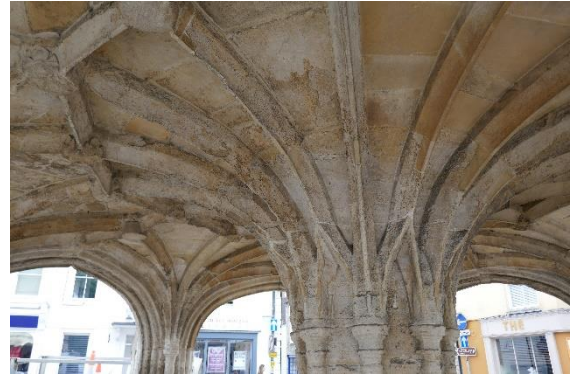
Lantern - small cupola-like structure, usually with decorative arcades, mounted on top of a dome.

Finials - decorative upper termination of a pinnacle, gable end, buttress, canopy, or spire. It usually consists of a vertical, pointed central element surrounded by four out-curving leaves or scrolls. (Britannia 2020).



Ogee cap a decorative line formed by two connected curves

Octagonal shaft – a supporting eight-sided column



Tierceon or Lierne vault

A tierceon vault has additional ribs (tiercerons, from tierce, third) springing from wall shaft at the corner of each bay to the ridge ribs along the apexes of the vault. Lierne vaults have short linking ribs in the crown of the vault between the main ribs. They provide the opportunity for additional carved bosses at the junctions. At its most elaborate, such a vault resembles a net stretched below the roof. (Looking at Buildings 2020).



The south east pinnacle differs from the other, it is topped by a sun dial and ball finial. The sun dial has Roman numerals with the SE face covering 5am – 2pm and the SW face 8am to 7pm. It is made from slate and brass and is believed to date from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. (Sun Dial Society 2021).

The earliest engraving of the market cross dating from c. 1683 shows the ball finial in place. It is also interesting that the top of the Salisbury Market cross, before restoration had a very similar arrangement.

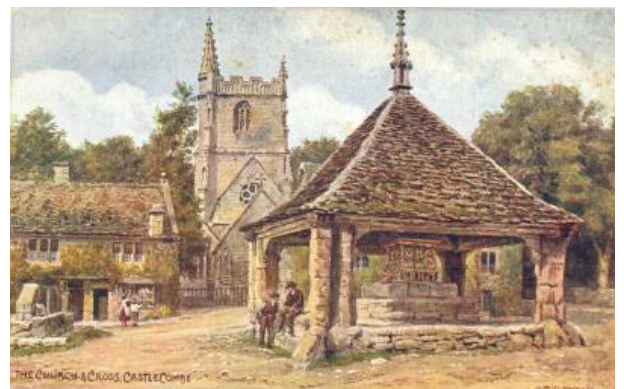


Salisbury Poultry Cross (Vallance 1920)

Malmesbury Market Cross 1683 (Malmesbury Civic Trust)

Why does it look like this?

Perpendicular architecture was the dominant style of architecture for English parish churches from around the Black Death until the early 16th century (Jenkins 1999). As the wealth of the nation grew during this period, largely based on wool, so did sponsorship of building projects in parish churches from wealthy locals and local guilds. Surrounding the parish church most buildings would have been timber framed in the vernacular style, market crosses such as Castle Combe also followed this style. So why was the Malmesbury Market Cross different?



Castle Combe Image Wiltshire Council



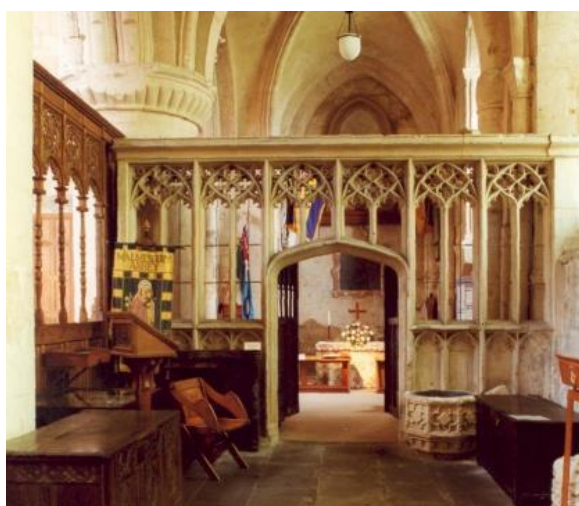
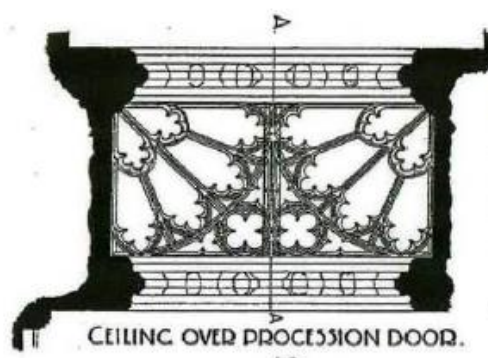
An obvious answer is that it was designed to match the nearby abbey. The Explore Malmesbury reconstruction gives an impression of Malmesbury around 1500 when the market cross and Malmesbury Abbey would have stood out from other town buildings.

The same approach was taken in Chichester where the market cross, similar in age to Malmesbury clearly reflects the architecture of the adjacent cathedral.

Image Cornell Digital Library



Malmesbury Abbey however is largely not perpendicular in style although several elements were developed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century in that style. Robinson (2002) collates the many sources of information concerning the architectural development of the Abbey and has been an invaluable source. The Abbey cloisters were rebuilt in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and Brakspear produced details drawings from his 1910 archaeology seen right, remains can also be found in the north east corner.



The North and South aisle screens also date from this period, seen left they display elegant tracery similar to that remaining from the cloister. A comparison with the Market Cross shown below shows that the perpendicular style matches 15<sup>th</sup> century elements of the Abbey albeit in a less sophisticated manner.

Malmesbury Abbey South Aisle screen

Malmesbury Market Cross interior



This architectural developments would suggest a time of prosperity for the Abbey. Less than 20 years later the Abbott of Gloucester carried out a visitation to the Abbey and found it in “sore decay”. (Victoria County History 2019). Corruption, loose morals and poor monastic practices were reported. Maybe decline happened so quickly or maybe there were political motives behind the report.

It had been rumoured that the market cross had been built from stone from the fallen east end of the Abbey. Robinson assesses this to not be the case, his view is that the east end fell shortly after Leland's visit as there is evidence that it was still in tact in 1546. The Abbey spire had fallen some time again "in living memory" according to John Leland. Dramatic although this was, it was wooden and is unlikely to have caused huge damage to the Abbey or surrounding buildings. It did not bring down the east end which is likely to have collapsed shortly after Leland's visit perhaps due to instability as a result of the spire collapse. The market cross was not built from Abbey debris.

When was it built?

To answer the question of when Malmesbury Market Cross was built we need to examine documentary sources. John Leland was a humanist scholar who received a commission from Henry VIII to survey the monastic libraries of England. He made several journeys and on his visit to Malmesbury in 1542 he gave a piece of key evidence about the Market Cross. He recorded (Toulmin Smith p 132 1907) :

"Malmesbyri hath a good quik [lively] market kept every Saturday. There is a right fair and costeley peace of worke in the market place made all of stone and curiously vouldid for poore market folkes to stande dry when rayne cummith. Ther be 8 great pillers and 8 open arches: and the work is 8 square: one great pillar in the midle berith up the voulte. The men of the toun made this peace of work in hominum memoria [within living memory]."

This gives a construction date of c.1490. This should be compared with other developments in the town of Malmesbury during this period.

Through the medieval period Malmesbury Abbey thrived as pilgrims came to the shrine of Aldhelm. The town also developed as noted by Bowen (2000), by the 13<sup>th</sup> century Malmesbury had a merchant guild with the building known as the Guildhall being built in c.1410, see right. The Guild with the alderman and burgesses ran all aspects of the borough's infrastructure including the market. The upsurge of political power within the merchant classes and comparative financial stability lead to an upsurge in building, some examples remain today. 20 Gloucester Street dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century and 46/48 Gloucester Street are late medieval. The medieval roof of Tower House has been dated from c.1490 also need White Lion and Green Dragon.



Image ExploreMalmesbury

This period of prosperity supports the build date of 1490.

Who built and/or paid for it?

The iconography used on the Market Cross may tell us about its origins, in particular who sponsored its construction. Most detail is now badly eroded but there are historical references which support what can be seen today.

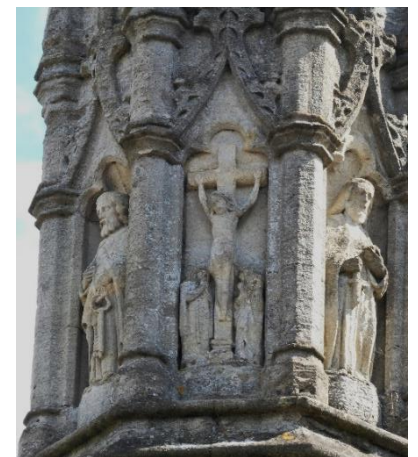
John Bowen's book in 2000 provides images of two carvings in the south east spandrel. The Gryphon which is just visible today is part of the arms of the Mitred Abbott of Malmesbury, the second much more weathered shows a crowned cross surmounting an orb, the arms of King Athelstan, used by the Old Corporation up until 1615. It is also familiar as the Malmesbury coat of arms today.



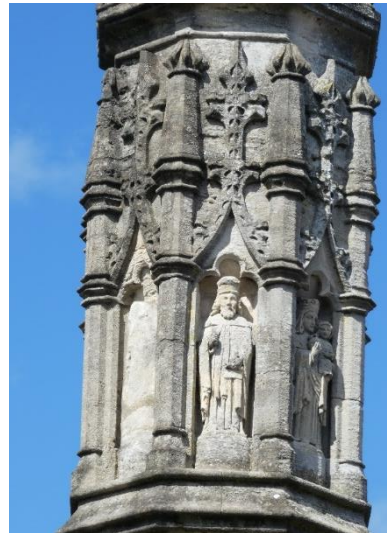
Gargoyles adjacent to the spandrels reputedly represent Malmesbury citizens but those visible today look like standard figures. The sun dial pinnacle discussed earlier also provides no evidence as to who built the market cross.

The only other source of iconography visible today are the statues in the lantern. Many today are well worn but the Wiltshire Times and Trowbridge Advertiser (20 April 1912). Confirms the representation as shown below.

From left to right and starting with the statue facing north-east, The Virgin, St. Aldhelm, St. Lawrence, St. Peter, The Rood and St. Paul.



A Local Benefactress which is heavily eroded and King Athelstan the final statue.



The Rood faces the Abbey and King Athelstan the town. Saints Peter, Paul and Lawrence reflect the dedication of the early churches of Malmesbury Abbey. The statues show a mix of ecclesiastical and secular imagery which support the images in the spandrels.



The eroded statue of the Local Benefactress could be an important clue to who funded the build of the Market Cross. No further information has been found as to her identity but the image left shows what she looked like in 1937. Her dress appears medieval rather than Victorian but that is not unusual in Victorian art.

Malmesbury Civic Trust

Statues are shown in the earliest engraving of the market cross and given the design of the lantern, there is no reason to believe that they are later additions to the 15<sup>th</sup> century build. It has not been possible to date the statues seen today. In 1881 the pinnacle had “traces of sculptured figures” (WANHS 1881) and again by 1909 the local paper reported that of the statues “only St. Lawrence and a mitred bishop can be made out” and that the cross was dilapidated. So today’s statues are likely to date from the 20<sup>th</sup> century which seems to fit stylistically.

The iconography of the Market Cross has given important information about the link between town and abbey as well as a possible local benefactress.



The next step is to examine documentary evidence.

John Aubrey, antiquary, in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century wrote of the market cross:

“The market-crosses of Salisbury, Malmesbury and Trowbridge are very noble: standing on six pillars and well vaulted with freestone well carved. On each of these crosses above sayd the crest of Hungerford, the sickles, doth flourish like parietaria or wall-flower, as likewise on most public buildings in these parts, which witness not onely their opulency but munificency.”

The Hungerfords were a major force not just in medieval Wiltshire but in the country as a whole. Dennis Martin (2010) documents the history of this branch of the family. Their rise started with Sir Thomas Hungerford 1330-1398, he represented Wiltshire, founded the family seat at Farleigh Hungerford south of Bradford on Avon shown right (English Heritage 2020) and became the Bishop’s Bailiff of Salisbury. Knighted in 1377, he became Steward to John of Gaunt and in 1382 purchased the estate of Down Ampney. His son Sir Walter 1378-1449 rose higher, also the MP for Wiltshire he was a Member of the Order of the Garter and a renowned soldier.



Having fought alongside Henry V at Agincourt he became Steward of the Household of the infant Henry VI. Sir Walter’s 1<sup>st</sup> marriage brought him extra lands in Wiltshire and Gloucestershire, his 2<sup>nd</sup> marriage added 6 more Wiltshire manors bringing his income in 1440 to £700 p.a. equivalent of c.£700k p.a. today. He is buried in Salisbury Cathedral and made various bequests to priories and nunneries.

Walter was succeeded by his second son, Robert 1406-1459 who was ransomed and almost crippled the family financially before backing the Lancastrian side in the Wars of the Roses and being executed in 1464 with most of his lands going to Richard of Gloucester. When he became Richard III in 1483 a pardon was granted to Robert’s son, another Walter who became member of the Privy Council and died in 1516.

Walter’s 3<sup>rd</sup> son, Edmund Hungerford inherited Down Ampney dying there in 1484. He was succeeded by son Thomas who married Christian Halle, daughter of wealthy Salisbury merchant and Mayor, John Halle. Thomas died in 1494.

Given the timeline above, it seems likely that it was the Down Ampney arm of the Hungerford family who helped to fund Malmesbury Market Cross but further supporting evidence needs to be examined.

When John Aubrey visited Minety he found a few pieces of high quality stained glass in the South Window representing the Hungerford family. They were probably in the window of a small Chantry at the East end of the North aisle used by the Hungerford Family (Wiltshire OPC 2020). The Knight shown was Sir Thomas Hungerford of Down Ampney who died October 1494 and the Hungerford crest, a Wheatsheaf between two Sickles was visible.

The Hungerford family also built the Hungerford or Lady Chapel and the tower of Saint Sampson’s Church at Cricklade and there are even suggestions from John Aubrey again that Cricklade once had a market cross, resembling the 15<sup>th</sup>-century covered market crosses at Salisbury and Malmesbury, bearing the arms of a branch of the Hungerford family, although there is no supporting evidence.



The statue shown left is in the Athelstan Museum. It is described as “*carving, figure of a man holding a shield, a mullet denoting a third son of the Hungerfords, from Malmesbury Abbey, Malmesbury, Wiltshire, 15 cen ?*”

*The shield carries the arms of the Hungerford family, differenced by having a 'mullet' [the five pointed star] in the centre, indicating a third son. This probably refers to Sir Edmund or Edward Hungerford of Down Ampney, d.1484, third son of Sir Walter Hungerford, the first Lord Hungerford”*

There is clear evidence of the importance of the Hungerford Family in the Malmesbury area and their public generosity.

John Aubrey specifically records Hungerford sickles. There is a wide variety of versions of the Hungerford sickles ranging from the herald crest to simple representations and more random scattering of sickles, as shown below. Today no sickles are visible on the market cross but it has undergone significant change in the centuries since Aubrey’s visit. An investigation of similar market crosses may help to show where the symbols may have been.



Figure 3: Tomb of the first Lord Hungerford and his wife, Salisbury Cathedral.



## Salisbury

Salisbury had four market crosses, a cross on the site of the present Poultry Cross is first mentioned in 1307, and it got its name about a century later. The other three were for the trade of cheese, wool and livestock and no longer exist. No further information about them can be found so it cannot be confirmed if the cross referred to by John Aubrey was the Poultry Cross. (Salisbury Museum 2020)

The present structure dates from c. 1450, the peak of the city's prosperity. It stands at the junction of Silver Street and Minster Street and is Grade I listed (Historic England 2020).

It is described as a hexagonal open arched shelter with buttressed piers enriched with carved and panelled pinnacles. It has a central stone shaft with a stone seat round at the base, carried up through a lead roof and was originally finished with a sundial block. The cross also was originally surrounded by a square of stone seats. So far very similar to Malmesbury and Aubrey's description. However the Poultry Cross underwent significant restoration in the 1850s with the addition of a series of flying buttresses meeting in the centre, covering the sundial and topping the cross with a hexagonal block with a niche on each face, crowned with a pinnacle and cross. The stone seats round the base have also been removed.

The difference can be seen by comparing the drawing by Turner c.1800 and the present day cross.



Images Uart and Wikipedia

There is no sign of the Hungerford crest mentioned by Aubrey in either image.

By 1901 the local press reported (Salisbury and Wiltshire Journal 1901) that the Poultry Cross was in a decaying condition and a view was expressed that the previous work may have been badly executed. There was a cry to involve knowledgeable architects in the work not just the Corporation Surveyor as previously the cross had been "restored not to say transformed". Antiquarians believed that Malmesbury had been the model for the original Poultry Cross and compared the differences of "the severe simplicity of the Malmesbury Market Cross" and the "ornate and graceful appearance of the Salisbury Poultry Cross". The overall view was that "it is well to do as little as possible in way of restoration". It seems unlikely that any valid comparisons can be drawn

## Trowbridge

John Aubrey tells us of two similar structures in the county. At Trowbridge:

“The market place was large, now part of Fore Street and Red Hat Lane, and at some point a stone market cross stood near the middle. It was octagonal in shape and covered, similar but inferior to the one at Malmesbury, but it was pulled down in 1780 as it 'was of no further use'. The stone ball from the top is in the porch of the parish church.” (Wiltshire Council).

Hungerford sponsorship of the market cross is not surprising as Trowbridge is the nearest town to the family seat at Farleigh Hungerford. However no further information on this cross can be found but luckily Malmesbury was deemed to be of continuing use.

## Chichester

Although in a different county an even more elaborate covered market cross in a similar style is the Chichester Cross. This stands at the very centre of Chichester and was built by the Bishop of Chichester in about 1500, so a date very close to the construction of the Malmesbury Market Cross.

Like Malmesbury it is a vaulted octagonal building with an open arcade. It has 8 buttress piers at the angles which serve to sustain a super incumbent wall, over eight arches, and adorned with panelling, rosettes, shields with armorial bearings, an embattled parapet and pinnacles. The stonework converges from the top of each buttress to the centre, where the eight unite and continue to an apex. The belfry and clock were added in 1724. (Historic England 2020). The Market Cross underwent alteration and restoration in 1746 and in the late 20th century. It is thought to have originally stood in a large market square but this has now been encroached upon by buildings.



The armorial shields albeit restored are still in place at the top of each buttress and there is further iconography in the frieze of the parapet, this may give some indication of where the Hungerford arms of the Malmesbury market cross may have been.

The comparison of the location of Chichester Market Cross, adjacent to Chichester Cathedral with that of Malmesbury adjacent to the Abbey has already been discussed.

Although not direct comparisons a short review of other local market crosses helps to put Malmesbury Market Cross in context.

If we are looking for a town of similar size and similar make up then Glastonbury needs to be



considered. The current market cross, erected 1846, now stands on the site of the former market cross which was built of stone c. 1600, on an octagonal plan, having clustered pillars ranged round a central column supporting its roof. Adjoining the cross with an ancient conduit with a vaulted roof. The cross is mentioned by Leland who visited Glastonbury about the middle of the 16th c. and it was demolished c. 1810. (Megalithic Portal).

Image Glastonbury Antiquarians

Cheddar market cross is an example of where a 15<sup>th</sup> century cross is then covered by a canopy at a later date, in this case likely to be the 17<sup>th</sup> century. There is no evidence that this happened in Malmesbury where the structure was built as one piece.



Image Ancient Monuments UK

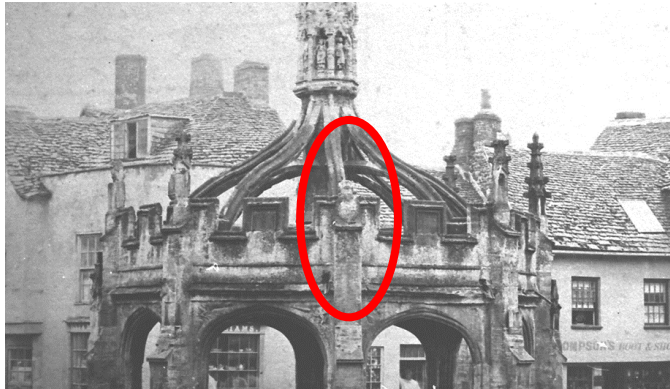


Closer to Malmesbury the Chippenham Buttercross was built c. 1570 and used for the sale of meat and dairy produce. In 1889 it was sold for £6 to Mr. E. C. Lowndes, who erected it as a gazebo in the kitchen garden of the Manor House Castle Combe. It was re-erected in its current position in 1995 by Chippenham Civic Society, paid for by donations. (Chippenham Town Council).

Although providing much more shelter than Malmesbury it lacks the elegant architecture.

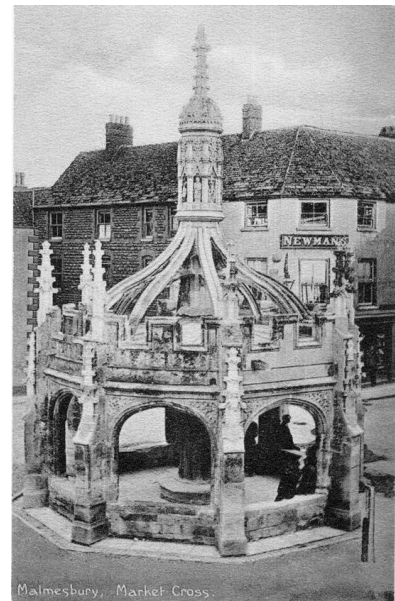
There are many, many covered market crosses still standing in the UK. From the examples above there appears to be no set pattern. Some have clear sponsors some do not, some are vernacular in style and use local building materials, some do not, some cover an older pillar cross, some do not. What is clear is that many have been demolished, many have been moved, many have been heavily restored. The fact that Malmesbury still stands in its original position and appears to have been sympathetically restored is a position to be very grateful for.

The evidence from Chichester can be used for a review of Malmesbury Market Cross in old photographs. (Malmesbury Civic Trust)



Photograph from 1865 with possible shield in same place as the Chichester shields.

Right photograph from c. 1912 showing the clean stone of the extensive renovations.

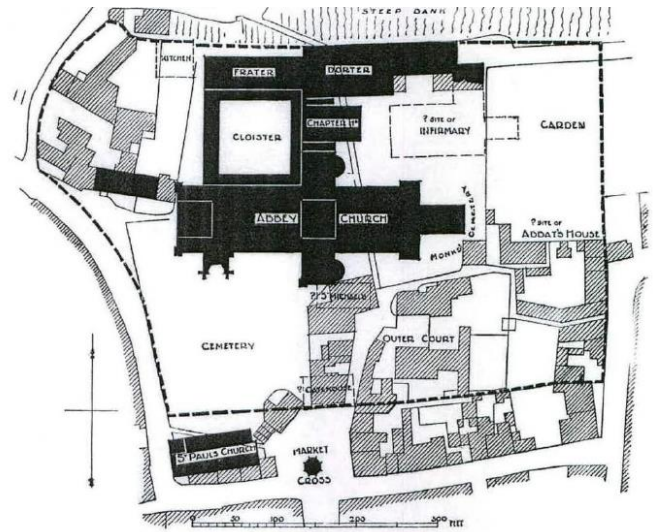
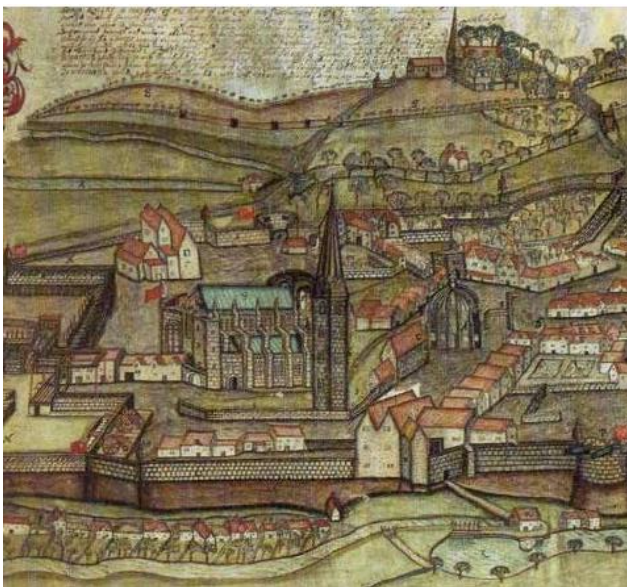


Investigations suggest that Malmesbury Market Cross may have shields bearing Hungerford sickles but that these are long gone. There are a few options for the Local Benefactress, 19<sup>th</sup> century Lady Northwick, 20<sup>th</sup> century Countess of Suffolk or 15<sup>th</sup> century Christina Hungerford. It might be expected that records would still exist if it was the Countess of Suffolk.

## Area around Market Cross

An important aspect of the history of the market cross is its relationship to its surroundings. The area around the market cross was part of the Abbey precinct and originally a graveyard with remains going back to c.1020. The townspeople encroached on the area and during the 13<sup>th</sup> century it was given to them by Abbott Colerne. St. Paul's church was to the north-west and the White Lion to the south. What is now the Rajah Restaurant was originally built in the 1300s as a guest house for the Abbey, the buildings to the north are younger in age.

The position of the Market Cross is clearly shown in the diagram right (Robinson 2002). Although at a key junction of the High Street and Oxford Street, an age-old junction, the cross is just set back enough for it not to be directly in the way of 20<sup>th</sup> century motorised transport.



The Birds Eye view of Malmesbury dating from the Civil War also shows the Market Cross in its setting. The town has developed but the cross is still a focal point. (Robinson 2002).

The Market Cross c.1900 with the former Abbey guest house in the background. (Malmesbury Civic Trust).

The review of the position of the Market Cross reinforces its importance to the town from its construction to the present day.



## Repairs

Although the Market Cross has survived the ravages of time it has been repaired many times during its history. An examination of the history of its repairs gives an insight into the condition of the Market Cross from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

The first recorded repair is just before 1800 funded by 15<sup>th</sup> Earl of Suffolk (Vernon 2014). During the following years it appears to have not been well treated, Richard Jefferies in 1867 reported that “the cross was now looked upon with very little veneration”.

The next repair was c.1880 following the Annual Report for the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) in 1880 (Marxist Archive 2020) reporting that the Committee had been informed that it was intended to restore “this beautiful and curious monument”. They wrote to Lord Northwick, the owner of it, pointing out the dangers of restoration, he asked for their help and two Members of the Committee went to Malmesbury, they drew up a report of the state of the Cross, showing what repairs were necessary. The Committee believed it would be acted upon, and save the building (one of the best of its kind in England) from restoration.

The SPAB, which still exists today had been set up by William Morris, and others, in 1877 to oppose what they saw as the destructive “restoration” of ancient buildings and support their repair so that their entire history would be protected as cultural heritage. May be this is why Malmesbury Market Cross did not suffer the fate of Salisbury Poultry Cross.

The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Magazine of 1881 describes how the “pinnacle bears traces of sculptured figured and on the west face of a crucifix but the faces of the work are much abraded by the weather and perhaps by rough treatment”. To fund the repair £140 was raised by public subscription.

By 1909 the local paper (Bristol Times and Mirror 17 July 1909) reported that of the statues “only St. Lawrence and a mitred bishop can be made out” and that the cross was dilapidated although repaired about a century ago. A restoration scheme was established by then Mayor Joe Moore but the paper of June 1911 right (Wiltshire Times and Trowbridge Advertiser) carried the alarming story that it might need to be rebuilt. The cross was already obscured by hoardings in Coronation Week and a special council meeting strongly opposed the rebuild. Then Alderman Moore and architect H. Brakspear were actioned to bring plans to the next meeting and no work was to progress in the interim. A way ahead must have been agreed because on the same day that the sinking of the Titanic was reported it was also stated that on 20/4/1912 the repaired market cross had been unveiled by the Countess of Suffolk. In attendance were Earl Suffolk, Chair of the Restoration Committee, the Bishop of Bristol, Mayor, the Corporation and landed gentry.



The cost had been c. £700 which alongside the cost of the Abbey restoration had been a major problem but Joe Moore had overcome this by raising subscription. A list of subscribers is included in appendix 2 and includes many familiar names. The structure had been underpinned, new pinnacles and columns provided, a new lead roof and guttering installed and niches filled with restored figures in bas relief. Importantly “care has been taken to preserve the original architecture and outline of the building. The statues are also listed as



figures in bas relief. These include: On the north, Madonna and Child; north-west, Bishop St. Aldhelm; west, Deacon St. Lawrence; south-west, St. Peter; south, the Rood; south-east, St. Paul; east, figure of a lady supposed to have been a local benefactress; north-east, King Athelstan. In the restoration care has been taken to preserve the original architecture and outline of the building.

Similarly reported “beautifully carved figures which occupy the canopied niches of the central turret, all those formally missing having been faithfully reproduced: North niche, Madonna and Child; north-west, St. Aldhelm (Bishop); west, St. Lawrence (Deacon); south-west, St. Peter; south niche, the Rood; south-east niche, St. Paul; east niche, a lady without emblem (supposed to be a benefactress); north-east niche, King Athelstan.”

In October 1933 the Countess of Suffolk gave the inscribed knife used in the unveiling of the Market Cross in 1912 to Malmesbury Museum. Its current whereabouts are unknown.

It wasn't long before further repair was needed. In June 1951 the Wiltshire Branch of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England noted that after an appeal to fund a repair 2 years previous the work had now been carried out at a cost of £900 of which only £150 was outstanding.

A car transporter demolished 5 pinnacles in 1979, one pinnacle can be seen in the Athelstan Museum in the town.

In 1991 major cleaning work was carried out at the cost of £53,000 (Vernon 2014) largely from an English Heritage grant and the remainder from donors. The donor's names are displayed on an illuminated manuscript held by the Town Council.

In 2003 Minerva Conservation again cleaned the Market Cross and “repaired and applied a lime putty shelter-coat to the lantern and pinnacles, we then had the opportunity to base the re-carving of vandalised faces and grotesques on local characters.” (Minerva 2021).

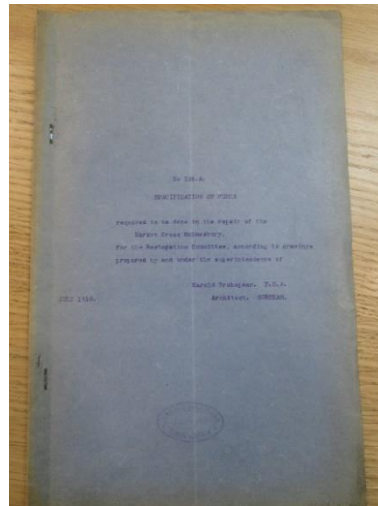
The threat is ever present, in November 2018 there was severe damage caused by a recycling lorry, thankfully now fully repaired.



Wilts. and Glouc. Standard 2018



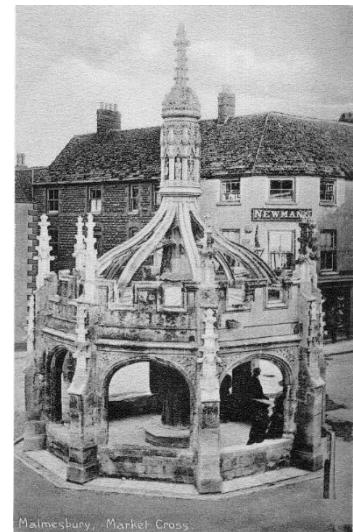
Details of the work carried out c1800, 1883, 1950 and even 1990-1 are missing. However the specification for the 1910 repair is held in Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre.



Harold Brakspear saviour of the market cross in 1910 and Specification of Works No.125 detailing repairs to be carried out. Both courtesy of Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre.

Details of the work to be carried out match that reported in the press. Only absolutely perished stones were to be renewed and the repairs were to be in the best Box stone. The lower part of the finial was to remain but the upper part and terminal were to be entirely new. Oddly there was no mention at all of the statues. The new stone is clearly shown in the image to the right (Malmesbury Civic Trust).

A study of the repairs emphasis how many times parts of the market cross have been replaced. It endorses the conclusion that the Hungerford sickles have long since worn away or been replaced. The identity of the eroded Local Benefactress in a non-Victorian gown remains speculation.



## Works of art

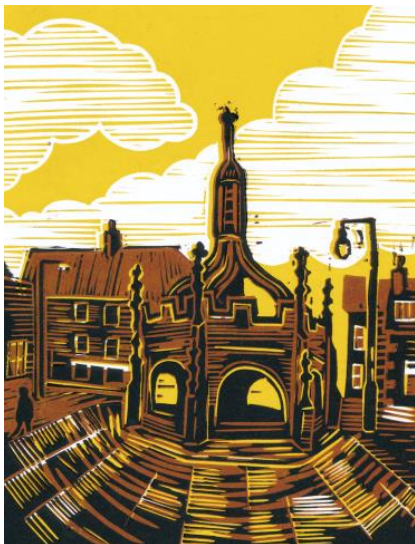
The final area of evidence to consider is works of art. The drawing of 1683 has already been used to show that the sundial was in place at this time.

Turner's sketch of 1798 shows the gateway to the Abbey still in place. Tate (2020)



A few years later in c.1820 the watercolour by Lady Farnborough gives a clear view of the relationship of the cross with the Green Dragon. V&A (2020)

The computer age has even seen the development of a 3D model by Malmesbury Civic Trust seen right.



Although evidence from the world of art does not greatly add to research into Malmesbury Market Cross, it is clear that it has inspired a range of artists through the centuries. Works are held in a range of museums, from the Athelstan Museum to the V&A. Today local artist Philip Kingsbury is inspired by the same view. Woodenspoon Press (2020)

## Conclusion

Thanks to John Leland we know that Malmesbury Market Cross was built around 1490. This was a time of prosperity in Malmesbury, the Abbey being a busy centre for pilgrimage and with developments in the town structure. It is likely to have been funded by the Guild of Malmesbury with sponsorship from the Hungerford family, in commemoration of either Edmund Hungerford who died in 1484 or his son Thomas who died in 1493, both of Down Ampney. The mysterious lady benefactress in the damaged statue may even be Christian (nee Halle) wife of Thomas.

Its style was built to complement the background of the Norman Abbey and used the perpendicular style of the cloisters and aisle screens also being built at this time. It did not use stone from the fallen east end of the Abbey and was unaffected by the fall of the spire, it being standing before both events. Its position slightly off the main road means that it has not been moved to accommodate traffic and there has never been growth in the centre of Malmesbury such that it was seen as either an obstacle or a remnant of former times. Several times in its history the cross has been in a state of disrepair but, although it came close in 1912, it has not been rebuilt and has been sympathetically restored. A truly remarkable structure of which Malmesbury is justifiably very proud.

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## Appendix 1

### EH Listing:

#### THE CROSS

List Entry Number: 1269291

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: I

Location: THE CROSS, MARKET CROSS, Malmesbury, Wiltshire

Market cross. Late C15/early C16, renovated c1800 by the Earl of Suffolk, and repaired 1909-12 and 1949-50. Limestone ashlar. Octagonal plan about a central shaft. Each face has a moulded 4-centre open arch with a low plinth, and 2 entrances facing SW and NE, with foliate spandrels beneath a drip and a crenellated parapet. Angle buttresses between have crocketed pinnacles rising from 2 levels of weathering. A large lantern above the roof is supported by cyma-moulded arch-braced roll top flying buttresses, with figures of the saints and the Crucifixion set in niches beneath attached finials, beneath an elaborate ogee cap with crockets and finials. INTERIOR: central octagonal shaft with attached columns and a low bench, with matching columns to the inside of the buttresses, supports a lierne vault with bosses. HISTORICAL NOTE: Leland states c1544 that it was built in living memory "for poore market folkes to stande dry when rayne cummith". An extremely fine example of its type. (The Buildings of England: Pevsner N: Wiltshire: London: 1963-: 327; Victoria History of the Counties of England: Crowley DA: Wiltshire: 1956-: 134).

