

The church of St Mary the Virgin, Rickmansworth, is of medieval foundation but nothing remains of the early building. The tower, which was rebuilt in 1630, is now the oldest part of the church.

The rest of the church was rebuilt in 1825-26 and again in 1889-90 to the design of architect Sir Arthur Blomfield when only the aisle walls with their Gothic Revival windows were retained from the earlier 1825/26 building. Many of the old memorials were resited within the church. This is why most of the memorials are older than the present church building.

1 FONT

Water is put in the bowl of the font when a person is baptised (christened).

There are **8** sides.

It is an **octagon**.

People are baptised with water as a sign that they have become members of the Christian Church. Lids with a lock were compulsory from 1236 as water was kept in them after it was blessed at Easter and needed protecting from theft as it might be used in charms and magic rituals. Nowadays the water is blessed on the day of the baptism. The font is often found near the entrance to the church because people being baptised are at the start of their spiritual journeys as Christians.

2 LECTERN

The letters on the book mark are **IHS**.

IHS can be found on **the door of the Aumbry in the Lady Chapel**. An Aumbry is a small cupboard for keeping the consecrated bread and wine to take to people who cannot get to church for the communion service.



IHS is an abbreviation of the Greek word IESOUS (ΙΗΣΟΥΣ) meaning JESUS. In Greek capitals it is ΙΗΣ. In Greek lower case it is ιης.

3 PULPIT

The pulpit is used for **preaching**; the speaker, usually one of the clergy, teaches the people and explains the bible to them.

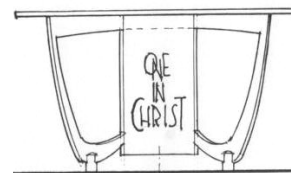
It is raised **so that the preacher can be seen and heard** by everyone in the congregation. There were no sound systems when the church was built. The pulpit was installed during the rebuilding of 1889-90.

4 MOVABLE ALTAR

The words on the front of the Altar are '**One in Christ**'

The Altar is a table used for the celebration of the Eucharist or Holy Communion. We use either the High Altar or the movable Altar, sometimes both. There are also Altars in the Lady Chapel and at the end of the South Aisle.

To the right of the High Altar there is a piscina originally used for washing communion vessels. Next to the piscina are three sedilia for those assisting in the service to sit down in.



5 EAST WINDOW I

INRI These are the initial letters of Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum, Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. These were the words ordered by Pontius Pilate to be put on the cross.

There is a **snake** at the foot of the tree/cross symbolising the forces of temptation, deception and wrong.

6 EAST WINDOW II

Mark's symbol is a **winged lion**.

This window was given in memory of Robert 1st Baron Ebury and Charlotte Arbuthnot his wife. It was installed in 1896. The window was made by Morris & Company, the company founded by William Morris. It is a composite design, the principal figures being by Sir Edward Burne-Jones. It was the last window made by William Morris' firm before he died.

7 NATIVITY WINDOW

Jesus is the name of the baby.

The animals in the scene are **an ox, a donkey, two sheep and four birds**.

The window shows the birth of Jesus (the Nativity) in a stable.

The windows either side of the High Altar incorporate stained glass from the old Rickmansworth High Street Methodist Church. That on the South side is the window of the Methodist Women's Fellowship and shows the Nativity. The one on the North side is the Methodist Youth Fellowship window showing the cross of Jesus, a boy carrying the Torch of Life, a girl with the Book of Knowledge and John Wesley, founder of the Methodists, riding his horse.



8 CHEST MEMORIAL



The bird is a **swan**.

This memorial is to the Carys, cousins of Queen Elizabeth I, Earls of Monmouth who lived at Moor Park. Robert 1st Earl at the death of Queen Elizabeth (1603) rode at speed to Scotland to be first with the news and escort King James

south. He also looked after Prince Charles, James' son, until he became King Charles I. The arms show the honours bestowed on the Cary family.

9 FLOOR TILES

The tiles, copies of medieval designs, are Victorian and were probably made by Minton.

Similar tiles can be found in many churches throughout the country.



10 STONE MEMORIAL

The daughters were **Mary** and **Martha**.

The stone is broken because it has been moved and is not in its original location. It was formerly in the floor of the chancel.

11 KNEELERS

The letter **M** is found on many of the kneelers. It stands for **Mary**, the mother of Jesus to whom this church is dedicated. The designs on all the blue kneelers have symbols relating to St Mary: the Lily, the Sun and the Moon and Stars, the M with a crown and the Fountain. There is one other design showing the Tree of Life with the Fruits of the Spirit.



12 STATIONS OF THE CROSS

There are **12** crosses. The last but one panel shows the shafts of two crosses

The fourteen panels show the following scenes:

Jesus is condemned to death	none	Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem	one cross
Jesus receives the cross	one cross	Jesus falls for the third time	one cross
Jesus falls the first time	one cross	Jesus is stripped of his garments	none
Jesus meets his mother	one cross	Jesus is nailed to the cross	one cross
Simon of Cyrene bears the cross	one cross	Jesus dies on the cross	one cross
Veronica wipes the face of Jesus	one cross	Jesus is taken down from the cross	shafts of two
Jesus falls for the second time	one cross	The body is laid in the sepulchre	none

This set of the Stations of the Cross were produced by Sister Dorina of the order of the 'Sisters of the Church' at Kilburn. They were originally designed in the 1920s though our set was not purchased till the early 1950s. There are at least 20 sets. Most are to be found in London churches but they can also be found in churches in Broadstairs, Kent, Leigh on Sea, Essex, Norwich, York and Greater Manchester and also at Perth, Western Australia and Toronto, Canada.

13 ORGAN

Tall pipes make the lower notes.

The organ was installed in 1951 as a memorial to those of the parish who served in the 1939-45 war. In 2001, the organ was substantially remodelled and a new great organ added.

14 BRASS MEMORIAL

Thomas' wives were called **Alice and Joane**. The type of collar they are wearing is known as a **ruff**.

Both the wives died when Elizabeth I was on the throne 1558 - 1603 Thomas outlived them and died in 1613 when James I was on the throne. 1611 saw the completion of what became known as The King James Version of the Bible. It is still in widespread use.



15 TOWER

The earliest date is **1630** which is found above the large West window. The tower dates from 1630. The other two dates are **1933** and **1985**.

The tower is faced with knapped flints and dressed with stone but is built internally of brick. The spire on top of the tower is a typical Hertfordshire 'spike'. The chiming clock on the north face dates from 1904. The tower houses a ring of ten bells plus a separate bell which can be rung from inside the church.