

In 2002 the chapel roof was re-laid using the original tiles; the old wooden pegs were replaced by aluminium ones. At the same time the Church obtained title to the Chapel via a Statutory Declaration made by Audrey Currie, PCC Secretary. The Land Certificate is held by the Diocesan Board of Finance.

Inside the chapel there is a large painting of The Raising of Lazarus (painter unknown). There is also a memorial plaque in memory of John Morley (1914-1996) who wrote several publications on Langstone.

Now and Into the Future

Currently, a service of Communion is held on the first Sunday of the month. The chapel is also used for village coffee mornings and occasional social functions. The Villagers of Langstone, and the wider Parish all hope that St Nicholas Chapel will continue to be a quiet and peaceful sanctuary for local people, and occasional visitors.

To find out more about St Nicholas' and the wider family of St Faith's Parish, please visit the parish website: www.stfaith.com



The St Nicholas Community joins forces with the local boating community, at the annual Blessing of the Cutters

*Historical Information is © Ann Stilwell Griffiths - 2009
Cover drawing by Roger Berry*

St Nicholas' Chapel, Langstone



History and Background

st.
faiths
havant

St Nicholas' is part of the family of people & buildings which make up the Parish of St Faith's, Havant.

Introduction from the Rector

Welcome to this quiet, holy sanctuary in the heart of Langstone, part of the great Chichester Harbour. We hope you will enjoy spending a few minutes here, sensing the prayers that have been said here since around 1870.

St Nicholas' Chapel is named after the famous Saint, sometimes called 'Father Christmas' or 'Santa Claus'. (Churches are traditionally named after saints to make them easier to distinguish). In Latin and Spanish, Santa means 'saint'. Claus is a contraction of Nicholas. St Nicholas himself was a Bishop of Myra in present-day Turkey, until the year 343C.E. He is regarded as both a patron saint of children, but also of sailors - which is why churches and chapels with his dedication are often found by the sea.

St Nicholas' is part of the family and people and buildings which make up the parish of St Faith, Havant. Such buildings include the historic ancient church, in the heart of Havant, along with community halls, worship spaces, meeting rooms, a day-Nursery, and space for a wide variety of local groups to gather. Here in Langstone, St Nicholas acts as a meeting place for the Langstone Village Association and a venue for intimate concerts and occasional exhibitions. You can find out a great deal more information about the parish on our website at www.stfaith.com.

Services of Holy Communion have been said here since at least the 1950s at 8am on the first Sunday of every month (except the first Sundays after Christmas and Easter, when services are said on those feast-days themselves). Other occasional services are said from time to time - and notified via the small notice-board outside.

We very much hope that you will join us for a service one day, to stand in the shoes of our ancestors who used this chapel to pray for themselves, this local community and the wider world. But if you are unable to join us, please spend a moment quietly remembering the generations who have gone before us, and lifting up your own prayers to God, who is surely in this place.

We sincerely hope you enjoy your visit.



Canon Tom Kennar
RECTOR

THE CHAPEL 1887 to the Present Day

In 1897, the Rector's review of parish work stated that Langstone services were "not quite appreciated" but by 1901 the Sunday services at "Langstone Mission Chapel" were being "well-used and appreciated". During the First World War the adjacent house was used as an auxiliary military hospital with up to 46 beds. Altogether 1430 patients were treated and 125 operations performed but it is not clear to what use the chapel was put.

In the 1920s, the Rector started a Sunday School which was run by Miss Doris Norkett, who was born in Pook Lane in 1905. She had about twenty pupils, mainly children from the tightly-knit community living in Langstone High Street. "Norkie" would arrive with her bicycle laden with materials, and the children would spend Sunday morning singing hymns, listening to Bible stories, drawing pictures and making models.

In 1926, £3 9s 2d was spent on repairs to the chapel and 15s 3d on lighting. A gas repair in 1927 cost 2s 7d and the budget for a caretaker was £6. During World War II there was a factory in the grounds of Langstone Towers making aeroplane parts. In 1950 the response to the refurbishing of the chapel was very good. In 1952 Reverend Douglas Caiger reported that the reopening of the Sunday School had been well worth while. The Sunday School was "No.6 in the range of groups catering for the instruction of young church people in Havant".

The chapel was once the scene of a wedding. On 27th April 1926, Charles Longcroft, a local solicitor aged 40, married Ethel Russell aged 42, by special licence. Ethel was the daughter of Henry Russell, an oyster merchant, who lived at Langstone House and ran his business from the Winkle Market on the corner of the High Street. On this happy day the chapel was decorated with evergreen leaves and white flowers. The bride wore a typical 1920s mid-calf length dress of ivory silk georgette, silver shoes and a veil of old Brussels lace crowned with orange blossom and white heather. Her bouquet was of carnations and white roses. Ethel's sister, the only bridesmaid, wore biscuit crêpe-de-Chine with a pale pink hat and carried a bouquet of pink and white carnations.

Sunday School at the chapel has been intermittent, being last resurrected in the late seventies for two or three years. In 1995 rising damp necessitated treatment and redecoration of the chapel at a cost of £1635. A further £275 was spent on new carpets.

St Nicholas' Chapel: A Family's Gift

An 1867 directory gives Henry's address as Langstone House, a seven-bedroomed property next door to his wife's two sisters. Soon after being left £1000 by Thomas Temple Silver, Henry and Susan, who were in their sixties and childless, embarked on reconstructing the property now known as Langstone Towers, and building the adjoining chapel. Most of the original house, which formed a large wing of Henry's new house, has since been pulled down. The cupola, which he incorporated in the house, was probably modelled on the one at the former RN College in the dockyard, and reflects his interest in astronomy.

Henry died in 1881, aged 76. His obituary in the "Evening News" of 23rd March 1881 reported that Henry Jeans *"died this morning after a long and painful illness. For many years he has resided at Langstone and was formerly well-known as mathematical master at the Portsmouth dockyard. He was highly respected in this district and spent a large sum of money in the erection of a small church where he himself held frequent religious services. He was assisted in this good work by the clergy of Havant. We understand that the services will not be interrupted as provision has been made by Mr Jeans for a sufficient endowment. Poverty was almost unknown in the village near his house and his demise will be bitterly regretted by all of his poorer neighbours"*.



Henry's estate was valued at £25,000. A codicil to his will states, "I give and devise to my dear wife Susan, all that Chapel erected by me situate adjoining the house in which I reside at Langstone, to hold to her, her heirs and assigns for ever". One of the executors of Henry's will was William Samuel Gloyne who built "Glynfield" (now "Flint House") which is situated in Mill Lane. William, a local brewer, had married Henry's great-niece, Susannah Jeans, in 1876.

An account of Henry's funeral reported that among the mourners were representatives of the Portsmouth Beneficial Society of which he had been an honorary member for nearly sixty years. Also present were twelve senior pupils of the Beneficial School, founded in 1784 to educate some of Portsmouth's poorest children.

Susan Jeans died at Langstone in April 1887, aged 79. Under the terms of her late husband's will all their real estate was auctioned, except for the chapel. The sale included several properties and forty-five acres of land in Langstone, about half of which had been inherited by Susan when her mother died in 1844.

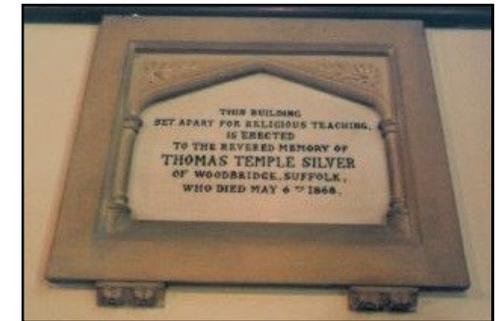
The Silver Family

St Nicholas' Chapel at Langstone, Havant, was built circa 1870 by Henry Williams Jeans FRAS, whose wife Susan was descended from the local nonconformist Silver and Bayly families.

Susan's father, Thomas Bayly Silver, was for many years a yeoman at Upper Clatford near Andover. Her mother, Sarah, was the daughter of Richard Philpott, a knacker and general dealer and a trustee of the Presbyterian chapel in Chichester. Thomas and Sarah had seven daughters; Susan, the youngest was born 1808, shortly after her parents came to live in Langstone. Thomas Bayly Silver, who was a trustee of Havant Independent Chapel, died in 1819 when Susan was about twelve. In 1838 Susan Silver and her sister Catherine were baptised as adults at St. Faith's church, Havant. On 23rd June 1846, two years after her mother's death, Susan married Henry Jeans at St. Faith's, Havant.

Thomas Temple Silver

The plaque at the west end of the chapel states, *"This building set apart for religious teaching is erected to the revered memory of Thomas Temple Silver of Woodbridge, Suffolk, who died May 6th 1868"*.



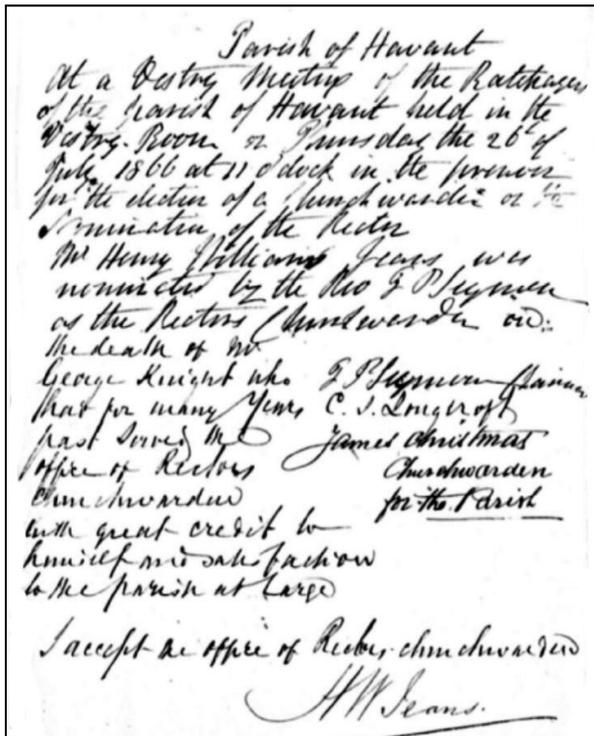
Thomas Temple Silver was Susan's second cousin. He was born in Woodbridge where his father, Thomas Temple Silver the elder (born in Portsmouth in 1778 and baptised at Havant Independent Chapel), was an ironmonger. When his father died in 1855 Thomas the younger took over the business. At this time ironware was one of the main imports at Woodbridge, which had seven ironmongers. The 1861 census describes Thomas as an "iron merchant and ironmonger employing three men and one boy". His wife Emma was the daughter of Reverend Thomas Felix Thomas, a Unitarian minister.

When Thomas Temple Silver died in 1868 his estate was valued at £70,000. His respect for the sea was shown in bequests of £650 to the RNLI and £100 to the Woodbridge Shipwrecked Seamen's Benevolent Society. There were legacies of £500 to each of Susan's remaining sisters, Eliza and Catherine of Langstone, and one of £1,000 to Susan and her husband.

HENRY WILLIAMS JEANS (Builder of the Chapel)

Henry was born in Portsea in 1804 and was the son of Joseph Jeans, a builder. He was briefly articled to a solicitor but in 1824 was working in the dockyard where he was put in charge of the chronometers in the Observatory. He then taught mathematics at the Royal Naval College in Portsmouth before it was temporarily closed in 1837. After spending three terms at St. John's College Cambridge, Henry returned to the newly reopened RN College, where he was mathematical master from 1839 to 1866, becoming a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1840.

Henry was the author of "Handbook for the Stars" (1848) and books on plane and spherical trigonometry, navigation and nautical astronomy etc. In his will he left his wife, "my own publications with the diagrams and stereotype plates belonging thereto and the stock of books remaining unsold and the copyright of the same". According to Alumni Cantabrigiensis Henry taught "for some time" at the Royal Military Academy in Woolwich.



St. Faith's Vestry Minutes show that in 1866 Henry was elected churchwarden to Reverend Francis Seymour and that he remained in post for six years.

Extract from St Faith's Vestry Minutes, which are held by Portsmouth Museum and Records Service

The Silver Family Tree

