

St Michael & All Angels' Restoration

History of the 1990 storm damage:

During the Christmas morning service in 1990, a freak gust of wind toppled the south east pinnacle of the tower, and, after falling about forty feet, this pinnacle (weighing about $\frac{3}{4}$ ton) crashed into the roof of the nave. The roof timbers managed to hold the pinnacle, but one large piece of masonry, a number of broken timbers and a mass of Cotswold stone tiles fell into the western end of the nave. Miraculously this caused only minor injuries, even though every seat in the nave except two was occupied.

This all happened as the first hymn "In the Bleak Mid-winter" was being sung. The Churchwarden's pew was demolished but luckily Colin Labouchere was opening the door to latecomers, including Cilla, his wife. Cilla says that as the door opened a great deal of dust and debris came out and she ran to the 'phone box. John Smith, the Rector, asked those who were not hurt to go home, whilst the emergency services dealt with the others.

Repairs and improvements to the church took place over the next two years, funded by an insurance claim for the storm damage, grants from English Heritage, Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust, The Historic Churches Preservation Trust and even some churches in America as well as much fundraising by parishioners. Finally, after much hard work, the church re-opened in December 1992.

The service of dedication and thanksgiving for the completion of the restoration was conducted by The Right Reverend Barry Rogerson BA, Bishop of Bristol, on Saturday 12th December 1992.

Many thanks to Joan Jackson for providing the majority of the photos and information and to Barbara Fenner for lending photos and documents from the church's archives.

(See below for three pages of photographs).

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The pinnacle precariously perched! December 1990



The church tower, February 1991



Repairs in progress, November 1991

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Internal repairs, September 1992



Barbara Fenner helps clean up, October 1992

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The choir returns, December 1992



The rededication of the church, 12th December 1992 by
The Right Reverend Barry Rogerson BA, Bishop of Bristol.