

Trefoil, or a three-leaf clover design, at the top of the arches is used extensively in the Church of St Elizabeth as can be seen by the five arches on the front of the altar table and the arch above the Crucifix.

Sitting in the choir stalls and looking around the Church of St Elizabeth, it is evident that over the past 150 years it has been extremely well maintained. This must be attributed to the Silvertop family and the many priests and nuns who have faithfully served in this church.

St Elizabeth's Church has brought peace and spiritual nourishment to many parishioners and visitors. When we take part in the Mass we know that the angels on the ceiling are looking down on us and, with a little imagination, they can appear to be very real. The Body and Blood of Christ are presented to us to unite us with Christ and one another in Christ. May we all continue to enjoy Christ's love and mercy that comes to us in the Church of St Elizabeth!



THE CHURCH OF ST ELIZABETH MINSTERACRES

INTRODUCTION

We extend a warm welcome to you as a visitor to the Church of St Elizabeth.. This church offers a place of worship to the parishioners of St Elizabeth's. The church and the parish are closely connected with Minsteracres Retreat Centre.

Minsteracres aims to provide a place of welcome and hospitality to all who come. It is home to a resident community of Passionists and laypeople and forms the basis of a much wider community of professional staff and volunteers. Together we create a space where people can relax, pray, and reflect on their lives. Organised retreats on our programme offer an opportunity for ongoing spiritual and human development.

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the opening of the church in 2004, Tom Rutherford wrote a history of the church that formed part of a commemorative book (***The Church of St Elizabeth, Minsteracres, 150th Anniversary 1854-2004***). Tom was a parishioner, as well as a great friend of Minsteracres, and he was very interested in the history of the church. His death in 2006 came as a shock to everyone and he is a great loss to our community.

The commemorative book is now no longer available. However, as the history of St Elizabeth's is written as a guide around the church, we have decided to publish it in its present form so as to make it available to a wider public. This has also given us the opportunity to include developments within the church since 2004.

We are delighted to offer this revised edition of Tom's ***The Church of St Elizabeth, Minsteracres*** in his memory and in the hope that it will enable you to enjoy your visit to the church that he loved so much and to inspire you to visit us again sometime in the future.

August 2008
Father Jeroen Hoogland CP
Rector

THE CHURCH OF ST ELIZABETH

MINSTERACRES

The approach to the Church of St Elizabeth leads you up a long drive, the top end of which is flanked on both sides by wonderful towering sequoia trees, which were planted more than 150 years ago by the Silvertop family. On occasions you may be fortunate to sight red squirrels and deer as they frolic and roam amongst the trees.

As you approach the entrance to St Elizabeth's Church, you will notice a statue of our Lady of Minsteracres. Henry Charles Silvertop was responsible for having the church built and the architects Hansom & Dunn designed the church in a gothic-pattern style. The church's foundation stone was laid on the 13 September 1852 by the Hon. Mrs Elizabeth Silvertop, and was completed on the 24 August 1854 at a cost of £11,000. The church seats approximately 200 people. At that time it offered a place of worship to the Catholic Mission that was established in 1765 and in later years it became St Elizabeth's parish.

Henry Charles Silvertop (whose original surname was Englefield but who, in 1849, changed it to Silvertop when he adopted the family Coat of Arms) had inherited the Silvertop estate through his mother. She was the daughter of Henry Thomas Silvertop, a brother of George Silvertop, the owner of the estate who had died, unmarried, in 1849. When Henry Charles Silvertop inherited the Silvertop estate he was 23 years old. On the 24 August 1852 he married the Hon. Elizabeth Stoner, daughter of Lord Camoy, a member of a prominent Oxfordshire Catholic family. He and his wife had three children, Henry Thomas, George Thomas, and Agnes Mary. Henry Thomas eventually inherited the Silvertop estate, George Thomas became a priest, and Agnes Mary became a nun.

Before entering the church and, looking up at the clock tower, it is noticeable that the lower stonework is hexagonal and underneath the clock the stonework is also hexagonal and of a pierced quatrefoil tracery design. The clock is also hexagonal-shaped with the four projecting clock faces having outer pale blue ceramic tiles.

being points to the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1. These symbols are commonly used in churches throughout the world.

Retracing your steps to the gallery area you will see on your left hand side a small door that used to lead to the Silvertop mansion. There are also three double stained glass windows depicting various objects and, once again, one of them shows the three grenadoes, sable fired, which of course are part of the Silvertop family crest.

Proceeding along the gallery you will see there is a double door at the end of the corridor. This door used to be the main access from the mansion to the church and was used exclusively by the Silvertop family. On the right, there is a beautifully carved plaque with a font at the bottom to hold holy water. This depicts the Holy Spirit looking down on the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist.

The Latin inscription is:
Asperges me, Domine, hyssopo, et mundabor:
Lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor.

Which, when translated, means:
Purify me with hyssop and I shall be clean:
Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

Taken from Psalm 51,7 in the Holy Bible.

Looking down the gallery from the plaque, towards the choir stalls, there are seven arches, with six of them overlooking the Nave of the church, and the seventh one overlooking the choir stalls. A buttress supports each arch, the top of which has a circular opening, with a quatrefoil design inside the circle. A pillar runs from the circular opening to the base of the arch with a pillar each side that allows two smaller arches to be incorporated into the design of the main arch. The tops of the smaller arches have a trefoil design. The small arches are similar in design to the three arches either side of the Crucifix above the Tabernacle at the back of the altar table. The main difference is that stone pillars support the small arches on the gallery, while the six altar arches are supported by eight marble pillars.

Churches are generally dedicated to saints. Many countries have their own patron saints and saints have days dedicated to them. The Silvertop family had their favourite saints and St Elizabeth's is dedicated to St Elizabeth of Hungary. Looking at the stained glass window above the altar, you will see four panels. From left to right they are dedicated to:

- 1) Henry 11, Duke of Bavaria, who died in 1024 and who was canonised in 1146. He was a German King who was Head of the Holy Roman Empire and Patron Saint of Henry Charles Silvertop.
- 2) Our Lady
- 3) St Joseph
- 4) St Elizabeth of Hungary who was born in 1207 in Pressburg, Hungary. She was the daughter of King Andrew of Hungary. Elizabeth was a lifelong friend of the poor and she sold all her possessions for the sake of the poor. She is generally depicted wearing a crown and carrying roses in her apron or mantle. When she died she possessed only one worn-out dress in which she was buried. She died in 1231 and, at Pentecost (28 May) 1235, the ceremony of canonisation of '*the greatest woman of the German middle ages*' was celebrated by Pope Gregory IX at Perugia in Italy.

In 1997 the above windows were completely removed, renovated, and cleaned at a cost of £3,000. The corbels supporting the arch around the altar windows bear carved head effigies wearing mitres.

On the left of the altar, in the Sanctuary, is a statue of the Virgin Mary and Child in white Carrera marble, on a stone and marble base, with a carved canopy of oak. The sculptor was Italian and the statue cost £300 and was put in place when the church was built. If you look at the Child closely you will notice that part of the index finger on his right hand is missing. How this happened, or indeed when it happened, is not documented to my knowledge. To the left of the statue there is a small silver door covering a niche in the wall. This is called an Aumbry and was originally used to hold holy oils.

OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY FOR THE
REPOSE OF THE SOUL OF
CHARLES ARTHUR JOSEPH OSWALD
SILVERTOP WHO DIED AT JERSEY
CHANNEL ISLANDS ON APRIL 27TH
1956 AGED 39 YEARS
TO BE REMEMBERED ALWAYS BY
HIS WIFE BRENDA AND HIS FIVE
DAUGHTERS ANGELA, VERONICA,
DIANA, NICOLA AND PAULA
R.I.P.

In 1966/67 Millshield was flooded by the Northumbrian Water Board to accommodate the Derwent Reservoir, which now covers 1,000 acres and holds 11,000 million gallons of water.

The last plaque to be fitted on the wall of the church is to commemorate the death of Wilfred Humble Gibson and his wife Joan Margaret. For many years Wilfred was a solicitor to the Silvertop family and an Adviser to the Community. The plaque reads:

Wilfred Humble Gibson
27th July 1905–25th February 1993
Adviser to the Community
and Joan Margaret Gibson
his beloved wife
16th April–26th February 2007

Looking up at the ceiling of the church with its heraldic-coloured design, there are twelve angels. Two are praying, two are in repose, and eight are holding heraldic shields, with objects of Christ's passion, that complement the pattern of the ceiling. The panelling over the Sanctuary depicts many religious objects. One of them is a contraction of the Greek word for JESUS and is shown as I.H.S.

The balcony over the original Sacristy faces onto part of the panelled church ceiling, which depicts many musical instruments such as trumpets, harps, violins etc. The next set of panels reflects in vocations from the litany of Our Lady. The following set shows letters and mainly tools. These refer to the twelve apostles and the objects with which, according to old traditions, they were martyred.

The panelling on the ceiling over the existing choir balcony depicts heraldic signs, including ships, which are associated with the Silvertop family. One wonders whether the ships are depicted as a reminder of those that sailed many years ago from the River Tyne to the River Thames! These ships carried coal from the north of the country to the south, which was originally the source of the Silvertop family's prosperity.

Looking at the floor, you will notice that it is covered with hexagonal shaped ceramic tiles, coloured reddish-brown, black and cream, which are inlaid with smaller black tiles with triangular and diamond patterns. This hexagonal design is reflected of course in the clock tower.

Making your way out of the Nave of St Elizabeth's to where the organ is situated, you proceed through a double door on the right of the church. Immediately in front of you there is a confessional box. You turn left and ascend six stairs. On the landing at the top of the stairs there are two stained glass windows, heavily patterned with various designs including three grenades, sable fired, which are part of the Silvertop family crest. On the windowsill stands a marble angel depicted in prayer. You ascend a further nine stairs to the gallery, then a further six stairs on your right. At the top of these stairs are three quatrefoil stained glass windows patterned with crowns. On your left is the organ loft with seating accommodation for approximately 20 choir members. The original organ was replaced in 1961 by an organ, of Durham manufacture, from a Methodist church in Newbottle in Tyne & Wear.

The four quatrefoil stained glass windows, which give light to the choir stalls, depict the four Evangelists. The Fathers of the Church saw the four Evangelists being symbolised by the four living beings around the throne of God. These are mentioned in Ezekiel 1,4-12 and Revelation 4,7. Irenaeus was the first to make this connection. The way in which Jerome attributed each of the four beings to the Evangelists has become authoritative and was commonly used in art. His division is based on characteristics in the beginning of each gospel. Matthew's symbol is a human being, Mark's is a lion, Luke's is a cow/bull and John's symbol is an eagle. The eagle points to the lofty theology in John's prologue. The cow reminds us of Zachariah's sacrifice in the temple, the lion points to the voice of "one calling in the wilderness" in Mark Chapter 1, and the human

These surround the central reddish-brown ceramic tiles. All the numbers and pointers on the clock faces are gold coloured. The spire projects high into the sky, giving an extremely elegant look to the whole structure. The clock, which was manufactured by John Moore of Clerkenwell, London, when originally installed inside the clock tower, was wound every three days with a key shaped like a car-starting handle. However, the ladders became infected with wood rot and, to prevent accidents, this practice was ceased. The clock therefore did not work for many years.

In 2001/02 it was decided that the clock and the tower would be repaired at a cost of £15,000. All the wood that had been affected by wood rot, including the ladders, was replaced. Some parts of the clock were rusted so they were replaced and the whole clock was then completely renovated. An electrical system was installed which enabled the clock to be wound automatically. The clock is now in full working order. It chimes on the hour and it is a delight to hear. The pendulum can be altered to maintain the accuracy of the clock.

At the entrance to St Elizabeth's Church the corbels, which support the arch, bear carved head effigies wearing crowns. The Passionist insignia was cut into the wall above the entrance to the church in the mid 1960's. The heart-shaped emblem has the words 'Jesu XPI Passio' written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, which are the languages of the early church. These words mean 'The Passion of Jesus Christ'. The words are enclosed in a heart, which symbolise that the heart of a Passionist promotes the remembrance of the sufferings of Christ Crucified. The three nails at the bottom of the insignia, and the cross at the top, remind us of His suffering and death.

We will now enter the Church of St Elizabeth.

In the late 1960's the altar was disconnected from the wall which allowed the priest to face the congregation while celebrating mass. This development followed the renewal of the liturgy decreed at the second Vatican Council (1962-1965). The columns of the altar are made of marble from Frosterley in Weardale.

It is interesting to note that, looking back to the early days of the Silvertop family, there were three daughters who became nuns. They were called Philomena, Seraphina, and Agnes. There was also a daughter called Catherine who did not become a nun.

In early 2002 the above stained glass windows were completely removed, renovated, and cleaned, at a cost of £7,000. This renovation exposed their beautiful colours, which now allows penetration of the sun. This in turn lightens up the whole interior of the church.

The large painting on the wall on the left hand side of the church is by a follower of Guido Reni and depicts Mary and Joseph tenderly looking down on the Child. In the left hand corner of the picture is a bundle with a staff across it, which gives the impression of a cross. One wonders! Did the artist deliberately show this to depict the cross on which the Child would be crucified at a later date?

Repairs to the heating system and the re-wiring of the church were carried out in 1999. When work was in progress it was discovered that wood rot had affected some floorboards that had to be replaced. In order to check the floorboards underneath the altar, which is immediately above the crypt, it was decided to enter the crypt by opening the original entrance in an adjacent passageway. When inside, the floorboards were found to be in a good condition and so were four coffins lying in the crypt, although they were covered in dust and cobwebs. No one had entered the crypt in over 100 years. One of the coffins was that of a baby. Elizabeth Silvertop, the first wife of Henry Charles Silvertop, had died in childbirth on the 24 July 1860 aged 30 years. She was the first of the Silvertop family to be laid to rest, with her baby, in the crypt. It is interesting to note there is not a plaque in St Elizabeth's Church to commemorate the death of Elizabeth Silvertop and her baby.

Two years after his first wife died Henry Charles Silvertop, who by then was 36 years old, married an 18 year-old girl called Caroline Filomena, daughter of Edward Weld of Lulworth Castle, Wareham in Dorset. They were blessed with four children, a son and three daughters. The son was called Arthur Edward who sadly met an untimely death in the Great War of 1914-18. He was killed in action on the 31 May 1916. There is a plaque on the wall in St Elizabeth's Church that reads:

Pro Patria - (For One's Country)
Of Your Charity
Pray for the Repose of the Soul of
ARTHUR E. SILVERTOP
COMMANDER R.N. OF H.M.S. DEFENCE
Who went down with the ship in the
BATTLE OF JUTLAND, MAY 31ST, 1916,
AGED 38 – R.I.P.

LEX ET LIBERTAS - (Law and Liberty)

Henry Charles Silvertop owned a house in London where he used to reside for part of the year. However, in 1875 he decided to live there permanently, returning to live at Minsteracres in the summer months only. It was in London, on the 3 December 1887, that he died. His body was brought back for burial in the family crypt in St Elizabeth's Church to rest alongside his first wife, Elizabeth, and their baby. There is a plaque on the wall that reads:

PRAY FOR THE SOUL OF
HENRY CHARLES SILVERTOP,
WHO ERECTED THIS CHURCH
DIED DECEMBER 3RD, 1887, AGED 61, R.I.P.

Henry Thomas Silvertop, the eldest son of Henry Charles Silvertop from his first marriage, inherited the estate. Henry Thomas was married to Rachel Mary Josephine, daughter of Alexander McDonnell of Kilmore, in County Antrim, Ireland. They had three sons and two daughters, the eldest son being called Francis Somerled Joseph Silvertop. Henry Thomas was living at Minsteracres when, on the 17 December 1893, he died suddenly aged 40 years. That day he had enjoyed a meal of tinned salmon in Newcastle. Upon returning to Minsteracres he was heard to play the organ that evening. However, at midnight he became ill and died suddenly and quickly. The cause of death was stated to be food poisoning from the tin of salmon. His brother George Silvertop, who was a priest, conducted the funeral service and Henry Thomas was then laid to rest in the crypt next to his father, mother and the baby. In the years ahead, including up to the present time, no other coffins have been placed in the crypt. There is a plaque on the wall that reads:

Of Your Charity
PRAY FOR THE REPOSE OF THE SOUL OF
HENRY THOMAS SILVERTOP,
OF MINSTERACRES
Who died on the 17th December 1893,
AGED 40 YEARS.
R.I.P.

When Henry Thomas Silvertop died, his eldest son Francis Somerled Joseph inherited the Silvertop estate at ten years of age. In 1913, when he was nearly thirty years old, he decided to lease the estate to a Mr J E Cowen but he retained the use of a cottage as it was his intention to visit from time to time. At the start of the 1914-18 War he joined the Oxfordshire Yeomanry. On the 29 April 1916 he married Nevill Geraldine, younger daughter of Mr & Mrs Foster Harter, of Salperton Park, Gloucestershire. The wedding took place in London and he visited the Silvertop estate with his bride in early May 1916. Francis Somerled was sadly to suffer the same fate as his step-uncle, Arthur E Silvertop, as he was killed in action in France on the 20 May 1917 aged only 33 years. The son of Francis Somerled was born in London only three months prior to his father's death and he became the heir to the Silvertop estate. He was called Charles Arthur Joseph Oswald Silvertop. He too was destined to die at a comparatively early age.

Mrs Nevill Silvertop commissioned the fourteen Stations of the Cross, which cost £600, and are made of alabaster and marble, to St Elizabeth's in 1918 in memory of her husband, Francis Somerled. There is a plaque in the church that reads:

Of Your Charity Pray for the Repose
Of the Soul of
FRANCIS SOMERLED JOSEPH SILVERTOP,
Lieutenant Oxfordshire Yeomanry, WHO WAS KILLED IN ACTION
AT GILLEMONT FARM,
MAY 20TH, 1917, AGED 33 YEARS. AND WHO WAS BURIED AT
ST. AMELIE BRITISH CEMETERY
VILLERS FANRON AND TO WHOSE MEMORY THESE
STATIONS OF THE CROSS WERE ERECTED BY HIS
WIFE AND ON BEHALF OF THEIR LITTLE SON.

Underneath the picture, in the door recess, stands the baptismal font. It was designed and crafted by Fenwick Lawson to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the church and was dedicated in January 2006. The concept of the font is to see the water as the main theme and not hidden by containment. The transparent glass bowl fulfils this purpose. It is a unique piece of handmade glass from Sunderland Glass Centre. The bowl is held by a trunk of yew tree carved in a linear form of three vertical forms containing Celtic references. The yew wood is symbolic of eternal life. It is an evergreen and the longest living of trees. The polished copper base on which the font is standing reflects infinity. The font is supported by a covered vertical panel of the Holy Spirit in the form of a goose referencing the Iona Community.

To the right of the balcony there are two stained glass windows, each with three panels. On the first window, from left to right, they are dedicated to:

- 1) St Catherine of Alexandria who was martyred and became Patron Saint of Christian Philosophers. According to legend she debated with 50 pagan philosophers who afterwards became Christians.
- 2) St Charles Borromeo, an Archbishop of Milan, who played an important role in the renewal of the Catholic Church during the Counter Reformation. He died in 1584 and was canonised in 1610.
- 3) St Thomas Aquinas, the great Dominican Theologian, who died in 1274 and who was canonised in 1323.

On the second window, the panels are dedicated to:

- 1) St Philomena, a Virgin Martyr, who was discovered in a Roman Catacomb known as the Cemetery of Priscilla. After prayers to her, many extraordinary miracles occurred, which led to her fame throughout the Catholic world.
- 2) St Seraphina. Very little is known about this saint except that she may have come from a town in Armenia or Spain.
- 3) St Agnes, a Virgin Martyr. When the Romans failed to burn her at the stake, she was beheaded in Rome in AD 304 at the tender age of 13 years.

The front of the stone balcony, on the right hand side of the church, has seven carved circles and, inside each circle, are three additional part circles. This design may have been intended to represent the Holy Trinity – Three Persons in one God. The balcony is not regularly in use at the present time except once a year, on Good Friday, when the re-enactment of the Passion of Christ takes place. On this day, Pontius Pilate delivers his judgement from the balcony to great effect.

Standing next to the balcony there used to be a pulpit supported on hexagonal stone bases. Entry to the pulpit was through a doorway where, today, hangs a picture of St Paul of the Cross, Founder of the Passionists. The pulpit was removed in 1955 and, for many years, it resided in the refectory where the Passionist novices used it to practise their sermons. To allow more space in the refectory, the pulpit was eventually dismantled, with two hexagonal bases being placed outside the main doorway of the Retreat House. At the present time these are being used as plant containers.

The Passionist congregation was founded in Italy by St Paul of the Cross, whose original name was Paul Danei. He was born in Ovada in Italy on the 3 January 1694 and died on the 18 October 1775. The body of St Paul lies in the Basilica of SS John and Paul in Rome. He was beatified on the 1 October 1852 and canonised on the 29 June 1867. Blessed Dominic Barberi C.P. established the first Passionist community in England at Aston in Staffordshire in 1841.

The striking picture of St Paul of the Cross was positioned into the wall of the church in the mid 1960's. The artist is Sheila MacKie and, at a later date, she also painted the two murals in the Retreat Centre, which depict the Conversion of St Paul and the Agony of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. Sheila MacKie is a local artist and she has depicted St Paul of The Cross in a long black robe giving a blessing. He was a great preacher so, at the top of the picture, are the words "*WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED*". At the bottom of the picture, on the left hand side, is St Elizabeth's Church and, on the right hand side, one of the well-known sequoia trees is illustrated.

It is interesting to note that the priest at St Elizabeth's Church at that time was Father James Corboy, who had retired to Minsteracres from St Joseph's Church in Blaydon, in 1910 due to ill health. The vigorous air and general ambience at Minsteracres improved his health tremendously and he became the Priest in Charge of the Chaplaincy of Minsteracres from 1910-1922.

On the 26 December 1925 the second wife of Henry Charles Silvertop, who was called Caroline Filomena, died. It was their son Arthur E Silvertop who had been killed in the 1914-18 War. Caroline Filomena's plaque reads:

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
CAROLINE FILOMENA,
DAUGHTER OF EDWARD WELD
OF LULWORTH CASTLE, WIFE OF
HENRY CHARLES SILVERTOP
OF MINSTERACRES, WHO DIED
DECEMBER 26TH, 1925, AGED 82.
R.I.P.

War is a decimation of families and the creator of widows and the 1914-18 War certainly had this effect on the Silvertop families. Arthur E Silvertop and Francis Somerled Joseph Silvertop were both killed in action and, on the 27 November 1917, William Alexander Silvertop, the younger brother of Francis, was also killed in action. There is no plaque in the church for William Alexander.

The 1939-45 War brought more sadness to the Silvertop family as, on the 25 September 1944, the only son of Arthur E Silvertop was killed in action in Holland. The plaque dedicated to him reads:

Of Your Charity Pray for the
Soul of Lieutenant Colonel
DAVID ARTHUR HENRY SILVERTOP
D.S.O. M.C. 14/20 KING'S HUSSARS,
ONLY SON OF COMMANDER
A.E. SILVERTOP, R.N. KILLED IN
ACTION IN HOLLAND 25TH SEPTEMBER,
1944, AGED 32 YEARS WHILE
COMMANDING THE 3RD BATTALION,
THE ROYAL TANK REGIMENT.
R.I.P.

The Belgian city of Antwerp honoured this heroic officer by naming a street after him called 'Silvertop Avenue'.

The last male heir of the Silvertop family was Charles Arthur Joseph Oswald Silvertop who was born in London and was three months old when his father, Francis Somerled Joseph, was killed in action in the 1914-18 War. Charles Arthur was very well educated at Downside, which is Britain's oldest Catholic Boarding School, situated near Bath in Somerset. This school was established in 1606. Charles Arthur was married on the 10 December 1942 to Brenda Wicks at St James, Spanish Place, London. They were blessed with five daughters, namely Angela, Veronica, Diana, Nicola and Paula.

With no male heir to inherit the Silvertop estate when he died, and the probability that the estate would be passed down to a male relative, Charles Arthur Silvertop decided, in the late 1940's, to sell the estate in its entirety. To this end, in early 1949 he moved to a cottage in Millshield, which is only a few miles from the Minsteracres estate, for himself and his wife and family. On the 8 December 1949 he sold the main house, the Gothic Church of St Elizabeth, the stables, 5 cottages and 110 acres of land to The Passionists for £20,000. The remainder of the estate, including 15 farms with associated cottages, and 5,000 acres of land was sold to an industrialist called Mr C Cookson.

Charles Arthur Silvertop then decided, in 1954, to move with his wife and family to Jersey. On the 27 April 1956 he died suddenly at the early age of 39 years. Charles and his wife Brenda were survived by five daughters, one of whom Diana is a parishioner at the Church of St Elizabeth together with her husband Frank and daughter Emily. On the 15th March 2008 Charles Silvertop's remains were brought from Jersey, reburied in St. Elizabeth's cemetery alongside his wife Brenda who died in 2007. The plaque dedicated to Charles Arthur Silvertop reads:

On the right hand side of the altar, the two stained glass windows represent St George, Patron Saint of England, slaying a dragon. This is a symbol of the martyr's victory over the devil. The corbels surrounding the arch around this window also bear carved head effigies but, this time, wearing crowns. In 2003 the two stained glass windows were completely removed, renovated, and cleaned at a cost of £3,000.

Beneath the stained glass windows of St George are three recessed stone seats with arches above them having a trefoil design. Four stone pillars complete this construction. To the left of the recessed seats there is a Piscina. This is a stone basin with a hole in the centre, a shelf above it, and above that a trefoil design arch. The Piscina was originally used for the disposal of water used to purify the vessels used at Mass but it is not in use today. It does not drain into a disposal system but directly into the ground.

On the right hand side of the altar are two doors with the top of each door having a trefoil design. The right-hand door is sealed, and the left-hand door leads to what was the original Sacristy. Inside are three stained glass windows showing objects and scenes associated with the Holy Eucharist. On the left hand window, depicted inside a circle, are two altar candles. These candles are on either side of a Monstrance, a sacred vessel of the Roman Catholic Church. In it the Host is presented for adoration, carried in procession, and used in Benediction. The middle panel shows Melchizedek, King of Salem, and a Priest of God Most High, giving a blessing to Abraham. This is a reference to '*Genesis Ch 14*'. The right hand window depicts two Flasks and a Chalice inside a circle. One Flask is marked 'A' (aqua for water) and the other is marked 'V' (vinum for wine). Inside the Sacristy there is a further door, through which curved steps lead up to the balcony, and to the foot of the clock tower ladder.

The balcony originally incorporated an organ and accommodated a choir. Henry Charles Silvertop was an accomplished musician. He employed many staff and, from within their ranks, he formed and trained a choir. He also taught many members of his staff to play various musical instruments.

***The Church of St Elizabeth
Minsteracres***

