

## Medieval and Early Modern period in Stoke and the surrounding area

Until 1807 the Parish of Stoke was very large and covered areas outside what we would now consider to be Stoke-on-Trent, such as Newcastle under Lyme. Until this point the population of this part of Staffordshire was very rural and the economy was largely made up of sheep farming.

This means that records and written history are hard to find in what is commonly referred to as the “Middle Ages” and “the Early Modern Period” which is why both will feature here. And will include things outside the Stoke area.

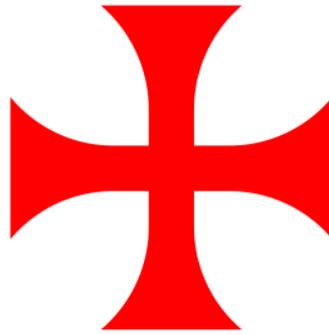
### Middle ages

It is only from 1154 that we have the names of the Rectors of Stoke: the first recorded being Vivian de Stoke. Vivian was fined many times for hunting with dogs in the Kings forest, which is now in Cliffe Vale.



Forest

In Newcastle from 1168 the Crusader knights had an estate at Keele worth £2 3s 7d at the time. By the 1250s the 'Templars of Keele' were holding half a virgate (15 acres) at Stanton upon Hine Heath in Shropshire. In 1308, after the condemnation of the Order, the Crown seized Keele with the rest of the Templars' property, keeping it until 1314.



Knights Templar banner

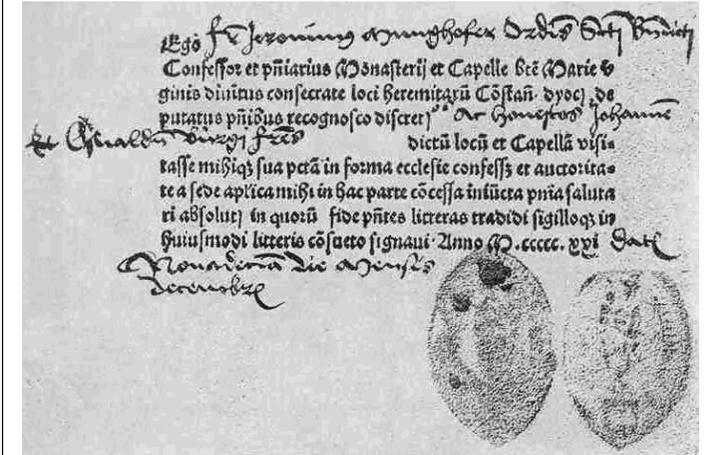
### Early Modern

In the “Early Modern” period which is roughly the period between the late 15th century to the late 18th century.

In which the early part of this period is dominated by the Reformation.

By the end of the Middle ages there were there were two chantries in Stoke church, one of Our Lady and one of St. Nicholas and St. Katherine. Chantries were where priests were paid to offer mass for dead relatives, in order that they could enter heaven quicker than they do would otherwise.

This practice, along with buying Indulgences - a certificate that claimed the recipient would be forgiven their sins and thus get out of purgatory quicker - could be very expensive. These customs were fiercely criticised by Protestant reformers who believed that faith in God was enough to get into heaven.



An example of an indulgence

These perceived abuses were strongly attacked by Martin Luther, in what is now Germany in 1517, when he nailed his “95 thesis” to a Wittenberg church in Saxony.

This protest sparked of a new movement within the medieval church leading to the Reformation across Europe.