

St. Peter ad Vincula Tollard Royal



Tollard Royal Church (circa 13th Century)
ST. PETER AD VINCULA, TOLLARD ROYAL

Dedication

Very few churches in England are dedicated to St. Peter ad Vincula (St Peter in Chains). One of them is in the Tower of London.

Setting

Although peaceful and apparently secluded, the church commands a fine view of the steep valley to the north. It is seen to advantage, heading the village, from the track leading north from the village pond. The church is decorated with flowers throughout the year.

The Building

So many alterations have been made that it is hard to discern the Church's architectural development. The chancel dates from the 14th century and is the earliest visible part. The earliest part of the fabric is probably the inner walling of the tower, covered by an outer leaf in the late 15th Century.

Other extensive works seem to have been done at that time, judging by the windows inserted in the south wall, and traces of painting found in the Chancel.

In the 18th Century typical alterations were made to the furnishings. Of the original, only the communion rails remain.

In the Victorian period the roof was completely reformed, and alterations made to the north aisle, changing the building considerably. The walls were squared up with lath and plaster set on studding which appears to be from old ships' timbers.

The plaster hid paintings, which have recently been revealed. Of the same date is the window on the east side of the north aisle, a good example of the period, by Bertini of Milan, 1864.

Decoration

All the walls were originally covered with paintings, used for teaching - the poor man's bible. Traces were found on the south wall in 1961 but they were too damaged to restore.

At the Reformation the paintings were covered with texts in cartouche form (a cartouche is a scroll with rolled up ends) and the Royal Arms displayed, as had been ordered. The cartouches were carefully restored in 1965.



Memorials

The most important is the effigy of Sir William Payne, who died circa 1388. Although he is depicted with his legs crossed, it is unlikely by that date that he would have been a crusader. The shield has an escutcheon of three lozenges, conventional representation of spindles with thread or wool wound on them. The armour is of banded mail. This is well known in manuscripts, brasses and sculpture, but is only found on four other effigies in England.

Sir William came from Lulworth in Dorsetshire and married Alianor, widow of John Gouis. The Gouis held a moiety of the Manor of Tollard, which passed back to them on the death of Alianor, who outlived her husband.

On the east side of the north aisle is a touching memorial to the Honorable Alice Charlotte Arbuthnot (1841-1865), daughter of George Pitt-Rivers, 4th Baron Rivers of Sudeley Castle. She had married Major General William Arbuthnot 26th April 1865, but was sadly killed by lightning on her honeymoon, climbing in the Schildhorn Alp 21st June. Two other memorials of the Pitt-Rivers have lately been set on the west wall of the tower.

Bells

Bell	Diameter	Weight: cwt-qtr-lb	Note	Date	Foundry
Tenor	33 1/4"	7-0-14	B♭	1999	Whitechapel Bellfoundry
Fifth	30 5/16"	5-2-5	C	1999	Whitechapel Bellfoundry
Fourth	28"	4-2-4	D	1999	Whitechapel Bellfoundry
Third	26 9/16"	3-3-10	E♭	1999	Whitechapel Bellfoundry
Second	24 13/16"	3-1-3	F	1999	Whitechapel Bellfoundry
Treble	23 5/8"	3-0-8	G	1999	Whitechapel Bellfoundry
Service Bell	29 3/4"	5-0-0	C♯	C. 1400	Salisbury Bellfoundry (Medieval)

Until early 1999 the church possessed a ring of 5 bells hung in a two-tier timber frame, the condition of the installation being such that the bells had been unringable for very many years. The original tenor was recast in 1882 and the old treble and second were added in 1889, all three bells being cast by Mears & Stainbank. The old third bell has been retained as a service bell. The old fourth bell, which was of exceptionally poor tone, was once retained by the Parish due to its antiquarian interest, but in 2010 the bell was stolen.

The new bell installation for the Millennium was designed, manufactured and installed in 1999 by Nicholson Engineering, Bridport, with the parish providing valuable assistance with all the installation work. The associated building work was undertaken by Bob Marston of Tollard Royal. The project received valuable financial assistance from the 'Ringing-in the Millennium' project sponsored by funds from the National Lottery, the remainder being raised in the community and through generous charitable donations. It would be impossible to mention by name all the many people who have given generously of their skills, time and gifts to complete this project, but we are extremely grateful for all their support and commitment.