



Saynte Mariden

The following notes on the ancient Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Deane, may prove interesting to visitors.

It is built on the site of an earlier church, the pointed doorway, much weathered, on the North side, being 13th century, and the earliest stonework in the tower being 14th century. The church was rebuilt about 1452, and fifty years later there was further rebuilding, including the present nave with its Gothic arches and panelled ceiling (1510). Soon afterwards, the chancel was completed. Two hundred years later (1712), a gallery was built on the South wall and about 1750 the Singers' Gallery at the west end. In 1833, the outer walls were raised about five feet and the galleries extended to the north side. Extensive restoration and alterations were concluded in 1884; the galleries were taken down; the chancel lengthened by ten feet, the east window rebuilt; an organ chamber erected on the north side of the Chancel, and a ringing chamber built in the tower. In 1950, the baptistry screen was completed as a memorial to the men of the parish who gave their lives in the Second World War. 1952 was celebrated as quinqucentenary year and an appeal was launched for £7,000 for urgent restoration work. The tower and clerestories were pointed, all windows repaired with new stonework where necessary, the lovely East window being cleaned and restored in 1961. The bells were recast in 1955, and the total cost of restoration up to 1964 was just over £10,000.

INSIDE THE CHURCH

Entering by the south door (given in 1954) the Baptistry and Font are on the left. The beautiful carving of the baptistry is a fine example of modern workmanship. At the west end is a stone receptacle dug up in 1962. The blue material in the panels of the screen is a part of that used in Westminster Abbey at the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Through the doors is the choir vestry and a staircase leads to the upper vestry. A trapdoor from the choir vestry gives access to the ringing chamber.

CENTRE AISLE

The oak-panelled roof is a reproduction of the old one, which had a beam dated 1510. 1884 is the date now carved on the beam above the chancel steps. Going down the centre aisle, the lovely east window by William Warrington (1845) is a notable work. It portrays Jesus and the Apostles, including St. Paul.

The handsome brass candelabra was purchased in 1737, when the wardens were authorised to buy a "decent brass candlestick". On the right are the pulpit and Hulton Chapel. The pulpit is Elizabethan and the oldest in Lancashire, and Cox in his book, "Pulpits, Lecterns and Organs in English Churches", states it is the only Elizabethan pulpit in Lancashire. Behind the pulpit fastened to a pillar, is part of the old reading or Clerk's desk with a chalice carved on it.

The Hulton Chapel stands on the site of the pre-reformation Lady Chapel (mentioned 1521); the fragments of ancient carving hung on the wall belong to 1490-1500 period—the oldest surviving woodwork in the church. In the window on the east wall are armorial bearings of painted glass (1660's) this being the oldest glass in the church. Lozenge-shaped armorial funeral hatchments hung on the south wall were placed there when the William Hultons, mentioned thereon, were buried in the vaults beneath. The white ensign was the flag of Admiral Hulton (1845-1933). Brass plates inscribed "Manor of Hulton" on the pew ends in the south aisle, indicate these "benches" were allocated to tenants of the Hulton estate.

THE CHANCEL

Entering the Chancel, the oak carving on the Holy Table depicts the martyrdom of George Marsh at Chester, 1555. George Marsh was born and bred in Deane Parish, and walked to Smithills Hall to give himself up for trial voluntarily. The oak Reredos is a copy of carving from Furness Abbey, and was erected to the memory of Bishop Fraser, second Bishop of Manchester (1886). A square hole in the south wall is an aumbry for keeping vessels, and this was found when the chancel was extended in 1884. A similar aumbry was built in the extension.

Looking back towards the west end, the line of the high pitched roof of the original 14th century chapel may be traced on the tower wall.

THE NORTH AISLE

Returning to the north side of the church, the brass lectern was presented by William Ford Hulton in 1877. In the nearby pillar, adjoining the Chancel, is the ancient piscina often found in pre-reformation churches on the south side of the Altar. This is evidence of the chapel which was built in the north aisle of "Deene Church" according to the instructions of John Hulton of Farnworth in 1486. He bequeathed money to defray the cost, and it will be noted that the carvings and design of the pews are the same in the chapels of both the south and north aisles.

Again, along the north aisle, brass plates on pew ends, give the allocation of benches for tenants of the several estates up to 1884. The rough-hewn benches are very old and the word "pew", originally, was only used for the square enclosures such as may be seen on an old print of the church. Pew ends at the west end of the centre aisle have curious carvings and the holes bored in the ends were to hold candlesticks. On the north wall is a memorial tablet to Dorning Rasbotham, "the famous 18th century Lancashire historian and antiquary".

Now we come to the North door, an old and durable example of local workmanship. The door is recorded in the Churchwarden's account of 1738, and reads, "1738 paid Ja. Howarth for a new door to ye north side of ye church £1 12s. 6d." The pointed doorway is seen to be extremely weathered on the outside, and experts say it is a 13th century doorway, and so the oldest stonework in our Church.

There are some grotesque carvings above the windows on either side of the North door, and also on the capitals of some of the pillars at the back of the Church. These were carved during the original building in the 15th century. Also note the fearsome "face" on the outside wall, west of the porch — the man (sometimes called the Fisherman of Deane) has a fish slung over his shoulder, with his fingers in its mouth.

In the north-west corner is the Clergy vestry, and over the door is the Royal Coat of Arms, painted in 1739. There is also a photographed copy of the document at Preston Records Office, "Creating a separate Parish of Deane" by Henry VIII (1541).

A more detailed history of our Church will be found in the booklet, but we trust the above will stimulate interest in this venerable parish of St. Mary, Deane.