

Foreword

This modest booklet is offered as an update of previous guides to our ancient parish church. It is published in connection with the celebrations to mark the completion of the extensive restoration work and the redecoration which has been carried out during the period 1983-86.

Important though buildings are, even more important are the people who use them. We need to remind ourselves, that for all its antiquity, Deane Church is not a museum containing fossils and relics from bygone days. Instead it must be seen as the spiritual home of today's Family of God, as indeed it has been for many generations of Christians over the centuries.

Church buildings can be both an asset and a liability. They are an asset when their atmosphere, size and shape make it easier for us to meet the Living God in worship, and to meet each other in Fellowship. They are a liability when they actually make it harder for us to engage in these Christian activities, and when the cost of maintaining them becomes so burdensome that the Family of God is deflected from carrying out its other tasks of mission and social concern.

We are fortunate with Deane Church with the building we have inherited. It is more of an asset than a liability. I'm glad today's Church Family has taken its responsibilities seriously in endeavouring to hand on to our successors a building which is worthy of the great God whom we worship.

Roger B. Jackson, Rector
March 1986

Introduction

Sir Nikolaus Pevsner describes Deane Church in *The Buildings of England* as "A Village Church still, and a proud one".

The present building dates from 1452 and occupies the site of an even earlier building. Dene is mentioned in the Domesday Book so this is an ecclesiastical site of great antiquity and, in many ways, is a microcosm of English history.

This guide, prepared at a time when the church has been extensively renovated to ensure its continuing use for worship into the next century at least, attempts to look into the building's past, and the people who built it and have worshipped in it.

The contents of this guide are inevitably selective and relate the visible evidence of the history of Deane Church. More comprehensive histories of the church and the village are available, and are referred to later.

We hope that this guide serves as an interesting introduction and helpful guide to our church.

A Brief History

The ancient church at Deane – in common with most old churches – was built on the best site in the neighbourhood,

It stood prominently overlooking a well-wooded dene – from which Deane takes its name – with the distant view of Winter Hill across the wide valley of the Middlebrook.

Tradition claims a Saxon church to have existed on the site of the present Parish Church of Deane, and this conforms to the view held generally by historians – that the majority of our ancient village churches stand on the site of an earlier Norman or Saxon church. The old Saxon name of the stream through adjacent Deane Clough – the Kirkebrok – supports this view.

There is documentary evidence of the existence of church in later Norman times. We find in a deed, Thomas, Chaplain of Flekko (Flixton), granting “in the third year of the seventh cycle of nine years from the translation of Saint Thomas the Martyr, the portion in the church of Eccles assigned him by Roger de Notton, to William clerk of Eccles for life”. In return William granted to Thomas “all obventions of the said portion to be received in the mother-church of Eccles for four years ensuing: saving to himself the obventions of Saynte Mariden” (the former name of Deane Church).

Saint Thomas the Martyr is Thomas A Becket, who was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral in 1170, so that the year of the above deed is 1227.

The Roger de Notton referred to in the deed had inherited one fourth part of the parish of Eccles Church, which also included the chapel of Saynte Mariden, and he had assigned all his interest therein to one, Thomas, a clerk of Eccles, who thus became the first known chaplain of Saynte Mariden, and as his salary in respect of the said chapel included “obventions”, that is both “alterage” and “mortuaries”, so there were then both an altar and a cemetery at the chapel at the time of its erection.

The year 1452 is given in Crockford’s *Clerical Directory* as the date of the erection of the present Deane Church, Whilst it has generally been understood that 1452 saw the completion of the present dimensions, with tower, nave, aisles and chancel’ the *Victoria County History of Lancashire* describes a gradual development. This is an interesting account of its growth and can more readily be accepted when the irregular features of the building are noted – the width of the arches vary, the pillars are not of the same girth, the south aisle is three feet wider than the north aisle, and the arches on the south of the nave are some three feet higher than those on the north. It should be remembered that many ancient parish churches were originally of small dimensions and were added to during the centuries.

Deane Church appears to have been a small 14th century chapel with the nave the area of the two westernmost bays of the present nave but without aisles. There was a chancel, possibly in the form of an apse which was common during that period. Though the church was so small it had a tower with walls some four feet thick at the base. It is thought that the tower – not so high as at present – probably belonged to the earlier chapel, and that a difference in the condition of the stone indicates the original height. The tower buttresses were added much later.

In the eastern wall of the tower, just under the pitch of the original roof, is a Norman window. Such an opening is not uncommon in old churches. The upper storey of the tower was used as a dwelling-place, sometimes by the priest, but more often by the sacristan, whose duty it was to guard the church’s treasures. From the window the guardian could command a view of the sanctuary. Early in the 15th century it is claimed the church was extended eastwards to include an area now occupied by the third and fourth bays.

The next alteration to this 14th century church seems to have been the pulling down of the northern wall of this extension and extended northwards, making an aisle of the same

width as at present. This would necessitate the building of arches, and these two arches are thus the oldest in the church. Later, the chancel and its northward extension were further extended by a bay, and the south side also built outwards with three arches nearly opposite those on the north side.

In the early 16th century there appears to have been much rebuilding and extension. The original nave was taken down and the present nave arcade, with its Gothic arches constructed – the aisles being extended westwards. The aisles had lean-to roofs, as shown in an old drawing. Some three or four feet of the original walls remain adjoining the tower. The clerestory was added, and a flat roof constructed with beams and an oak-panelled ceiling. The *Victorian History* states that the date “1510” was carved on one of the roof timbers.

The church would then cover the area of the present nave and aisles, but with no vestry: there was a window in the western wall of the north aisle not wholly removed when the vestry door was added – the remaining portion can be seen above the vestry door. A chancel was built soon afterwards, apparently still early in the 16th century.

An old plan of the church, updated but drawn before the vestry was built, gives the following dimensions of the church:

Length of Body of Church – 72 feet

Breadth of Body of Church – 52 feet

Chancel – 19 feet broad and 17 feet in depth.

The length of the church does not lie due east but some few degrees north of it, thus conforming to the old custom of building churches so that they lie in line with the rising sun on the festival day of the patron saint: the day of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is September 8th. Around this period the name of the Blessed Virgin was treated with less reverence and the church ceased to be known as Saynte Mariden, being given its present-day name of Deane Church in about 1522.

In the year 1535, Henry VIII assumed the title ‘Supreme Head on Earth of the Church of England’, finally breaking with Rome. 1541 was the memorable year in which Henry, by letters patent, ordained the Chapel of Saynte Mariden the Parish Church of the parochial district of ten townships assigned to it, receiving the name Deane after the ancient village. 1515 saw the birth of George Marsh, who was to become Deane’s most famous preacher, being martyred at the stake near Chester in 1555.

There does not appear to have been any alteration or addition to the church of any consequence for nearly two hundred years, when, in 1712, a gallery was erected by Richard Edge of Middle Hulton “... from the Great Door at the west end of the south aisle eastward in length seven yards and a half (as far as the parishioners use that aisle belonging to Henry Hilton, Esq.), and in breadth from the south wall six yards and two feet, together with a convenient stairs”. About the middle of the century another gallery, called the “Singers’ Gallery”, was built at the west end of the church. A drawing preserved in the Diocesan Registry Office at Chester shows that this gallery adjoining the tower extended into the south aisle and joined the older gallery. Access to the west gallery was by stairs leading from doors built in the west walls of the north and south aisles and near the outer wall of the aisles.

In 1777 a vestry was erected between the north door and the west wall of the aisle. This could not have been a very solid structure, however, for it cost only £4 12s. 2d. (£4.61). Extensive repair to the fabric was carried out in 1807 following a “respectable meeting of the churchwardens, landowners and inhabitants”. The roofs of the church and tower were repaired, the floor of the church was levelled and re-flagged, and the exterior of the church was pointed and repaired.

The next addition to the church was the building of the present vestry: the minutes of a churchwardens’ meeting held 9th April, 1822, recorded: “It was resolved That the vestry be built on the outside, in a suitable manner, that an iron chest be put in, and that it be filled up with everything requisite ...”. In the angle between the tower and the outer wall of the north aisle there was the charnel house, called on an old plan the ‘Bone House’. As the churchyard had then been extended there was no need for this gruesome building and it was demolished and the ‘New Vestry’ was built by Thomas Heaton, stonemason and builder, of Bank Street, Bolton, at a cost of £63 7s. 9d., in 1823. what appears to be evidence of the bone house remains over the stairs leading to the upper vestry.

In 1833 galleries were erected over the north and south aisles. To erect them it was necessary to add some five feet to the height of the outer walls and to give light in the galleries a second row of windows was put in each gallery. In the Diocesan Registry Office at Chester is a plan of the proposed new galleries, which were to be 7ft. 7ins. above the aisles, and to have three tiers of benches. William Hulton, Esq., was granted permission to erect a porch at the south-western angle of the church, and from this porch led the stairs to the south gallery. Two stone shields with the Hulton lion and the carved figure of the fisherman were transferred from over the Hulton door to a place over the door of the new porch. During these alterations an iron hinge bearing the date “1412” was found on a door.

The erection of these galleries provided 420 additional seats making the total accommodation 1,229. At this time there were in the parish, chapels at Smithills, Westhoughton, Horwich, Peel and Farnworth, but additional accommodation was still required because of the increase in population, due in large measure to the Industrial Revolution, which brought many people to Bolton and the surrounding districts.

The levying of rates to defray expenses of the church had not met with any widespread opposition for many years, but at a vestry meeting held in the church on 5th December, 1883, there were some who opposed the levying of a rate to meet the cost of the galleries. The number present was so large that the meeting adjourned to the churchyard, where those for the rate arranged themselves on the east of the path and those in opposition stood on the west. There was a resounding victory for the supporters and there was much good-humoured chaffing when some who before had denounced the rate assayed to pass over unobserved to the popular side.

The Rev. H.S.Patterson, in his booklet, *Notes on Deane Church, Lancashire*, written in 1883, criticises strongly the work which was carried out about 1833. He complains that two-thirds of the ground floor accommodation was rendered defective by the galleries, and suggests that increased accommodation should have been provided by the erection of transepts; stonework in windows and doors was covered with cement; the capitals of the pillars were chopped away rather than alter the woodwork of pews. A chancel reredos was added which did not agree with the windows. The chancel floor was raised and any

old stones and brasses covered over; and a fine large ancient porch gave way to the present one of five feet in length. In such manner Mr. Patterson criticised the effort made by his predecessor and his parishioners to meet the demands of the people, many of whom walked long distances to worship in their parish church,

After making this review, the Rev. H.S.Patterson outlined a restoration scheme which, he wrote, "is very modest". A fund was opened, and the restoration of the church was completed in 1884.

The work of restoration and extension does not seem "very modest". The galleries were taken down and the doorways which gave access to them were built up – though the one on the south aisle was not built up on the inside, and the arch of this doorway can be seen behind the panelling in the baptistery. An examination of the pillars shows where it had been necessary to remove part of the stonework to give support to the galleries. The chancel was extended ten feet and the perpendicular east window rebuilt. A square hole found in the south wall, was an aumbry for keeping Communion vessels. But already another had been made, so we have two. A stone tablet under the window on the outside wall records: "This Chancel lengthened ten feet A.D. 1884. H.S.Patterson, Vicar."

The fine oak-panelled roof is an exact reproduction of the old one, and the corbels, partly supporting the roof, are carved figures – some of the old worn corbels remain. It is interesting to note that the year "1884" is carved on the beam above the chancel steps – replacing, it would appear, the carving of "1510" on the woodwork of the original oak roof.

In building the organ-chamber the window on the north wall of the chancel and the one on the east end of the north aisle were removed. The organ, which was originally in the west gallery, was removed to the new organ-chamber, and the choir stalls were erected in the chancel. A new ringing-chamber was built in the tower, the ringers having previously rung from the ground floor. The square pews that remained were replaced by the present straight open ones.

The pulpit, which had stood at the north side of the nave, was lowered and moved to the position at the south side, previously occupied by the clerk's desk, and the front of this desk was fastened to the wall behind the pulpit. The lectern was moved from the centre of the chancel steps to its present position on the north side.

The church was reopened by Dr. James Fraser, Bishop of Manchester, on 22nd December, 1884.

In 1896 the ground floor of the tower was adapted for use as a vestry, and a passage made through the tower wall connecting it with the clergy vestry, which was also improved, and more accommodation provided. An iron spiral staircase was afterwards fixed in the clergy vestry giving access to the muniment room above. This spiral staircase was removed in 1952, being replaced by an enclosed one, and the muniment room converted for use as a choir vestry.

On 20th May, 1946, a meeting of parishioners decided to erect a baptistery as a war memorial to the men of the parish who gave their lives in the Second World War, the money to be raised by direct gifts. This form of memorial commended itself as being "the erection of something in the church in our generation – a contribution to the history of the church". Due to the difficulties of the early post-war years, the work was unavoidably delayed and it was not until 1950 that the memorial was eventually started.

1952 was celebrated as the quincentenary of Deane Church, and considerable restoration work was planned. This included a new South Door, alterations to the Choir Vestry, repointing of the walls, new stonework to the windows and restoration of the South Clerestory windows. In 1955 the eight bells were recast and rehung.

The organ was completely rebuilt in 1966 with a detached console, the pipes being fitted in the loft above the organ chamber. The space thus created was prepared for a chapel, two new windows formed, and a Yorkstone altar table installed. The work, commenced in 1969 and the new chapel was dedicated by Canon K.M.Bishop, in 1976.

Extensive restoration was carried out in 1983 on the discovery of dry rot in the Choir Vestry, the whole of the north aisle roof and much of the south aisle roof. It was also seen that the stonework around the North Clerestory windows was in poor condition and in need of renewal. At the time of writing – late 1985 – all this work is at an advanced stage. The organ was partly dismantled and the opportunity taken to overhaul and clean it. In 1986 the Church Council resolved to remove the font, open up the baptistery and commission a new font to be located nearer the chancel. The project was completed in 1986, at a total cost of £80,000.

This briefly, is the story of Deane Church. Over 500 years of continuous worship has taken place within these walls. It is our wish and intention that, God willing, worship will continue within the Holy Place into the indefinite future.

Now, it is our pleasure, if we may, to guide you round our ancient and lovely Church.

Interior Tour

Our tour commences at the Porch – a relatively modern structure built in 1833 to replace the original larger and much more lavish one.

The Baptistry Screen (1946) carries the escutcheons of the Heaton, Hulton and Tempest families, and that of the Borough of Bolton.

Note the blue material at the back of the Wardens Pews – which came from Westminster Abbey and was used in the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.

The tower contains a peal of eight bells recast in 1955, and replacing the 1896 octave, six of which dated back to 1723. Records show that Deane had bells as far back as the Dissolution.

The small window space probably indicates that a visiting clergyman was provided with overnight accommodation here. Over the Vestry Door can be seen the Royal Coat of Arms dating from 1739, and hung in full view of the preacher to remind him that he should speak no word derogatory to the Crown!

The rearmost window in the North Wall commemorates John and Charles Wesley, the first Methodists, and is adjacent to the North Door. Whilst the present door dates only from 1738, the doorway itself is of 13th century origin, attesting to the fact that an earlier church stood on this site long before the present church was completed in 1452.

While continuing along the North Wall, note the Pews, many of which are of great antiquity and show adze marks. There are also many interesting plates and carvings on the pew ends.

The window commemorating George Marsh is adjacent to the last of the pews.

Moving into the Chapel note the medieval Piscina on the right hand side, indicating that there was a chapel here as early as 1486. Work on the modern altar table and chapel date from the period 1969 – 76 and were made possible by the relocation of the organ. Until

1826, music in the church was provided by musicians playing a variety of instruments, but in the same year, the organ was installed in the west gallery. It was enlarged in 1878, removed to its present position in 1887, rebuilt in 1966, and cleaned and overhauled in 1985. The Reverend H.S.Patterson designed the Organ Screen which features an interesting National Anthem scroll.

In the Chancel the most striking feature is the Altar Frontal which depicts the martyrdom of George Marsh in 1555, with side panels depicting the Evangelists. The Reredos, also carved in oak, is unusual in design and detail. Erected in 1886, it is a copy of the Sedilia at Furness Abbey and is carved along the top with the signs of the Passion. In the centre is a Pelican, often regarded as a symbol of Christ.

The magnificent East Window by William Warrington in 1845, depicts Jesus and the Apostles including Saint Paul, and is considered to be one of the best examples of stained glass of that period. The Chancel was extended by ten feet in 1884, the East Window being carefully dismantled and rebuilt – hence the reason for there being two Aumbries in the South Wall.

From the Chancel Steps, look into the body of the church. The line of the steeply pitched roof of the original 14th century chapel can be seen on the tower wall. The oak panelled roof is a reproduction of the original one. The date above the Chancel Steps shows this roof to have been built in 1884, replacing the 1510 original. Note the newer carved corbels supporting the existing beams, and the original corbels, now redundant.

Notice also the Candelabrum, purchased in 1737 when the wardens were authorised to buy “a decent brass candlestick”!

One can begin to appreciate how the church has developed over the centuries, in the varying spans, heights and shapes of the columns and arches, the varying aisle widths, the still evident alterations to stonework, and the often grotesque carvings.

The Lectern was presented by W.F.Hulton of Hulton Park in 1877.

The Pulpit is elaborate Elizabethan and the oldest in Lancashire. It was originally positioned at the head of the centre aisle and was moved to its present position late in the nineteenth century. The Clerk’s Desk is still adjacent to the pulpit, fastened to the pillar behind the pulpit itself.

Continuing past the front of the pulpit, we enter the Hulton Chapel which stands on the site of the pre-Reformation Lady Chapel. The window in the East Wall contains the oldest glass in the church, dating from the 1660’s and the remains of carvings on the walls are the oldest surviving examples of woodwork in the church, dating from about 1490. The many tablets on the walls attest to the Hulton family’s long involvement with Deane Church. The White Ensign came from HMS Hercules, the flagship of Admiral Hulton. The Screen was erected around 1766.

Adjacent to the Hulton Chapel are the Funeral Hatchments relating to three different William Hultons. These are particularly interesting and attractive examples hopefully to be restored – an expensive undertaking.

Once into the South Aisle again note the Pew ends – in this indicating that these pews were assigned to tenants on the Hulton estates.

A short walk along the south aisle, past the brass tablet commemorating the 1914-18 War takes you back to the south door and the end of this short tour.

If you have enjoyed this brief tour of the church interior, you may be interested in the more detailed publication entitled simply “Deane Church”.

Exterior Tour

We start our tour at the Lych Gate – of unusual size, and built in 1903 as a memorial. It shows the arms of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, the Reverend H.S.Patterson, and Miss Ashton, the donor. An earlier gate existed between 1752 and 1799 which had, in turn, replaced an even earlier one.

Emerging from the Lych Gate we see another reference to the Reverend H.S.Patterson in the form of a stone pulpit erected by his relatives in memory of the man who had done so much for Deane Church. It is known as the Patterson Pulpit and outdoor services have been conducted from it on “Sermons Day”.

Immediately ahead, beside the path, stands the George Marsh Memorial Cross, the base of which is reputed to be of Saxon origin and from which earlier preachers taught. It originally stood some half mile from the church at New York. The inscriptions record the martyrdom of George Marsh, who was born at Broadgate in 1515, and the erection of the memorial by Reverend H.S.Patterson in 1893.

As we approach the church porch, a gravestone a few yards to the east of the door is dated 1608 and is the oldest decipherable stone in the churchyard. However, near the East Window can be seen a rough hewn stone with a cross marked on it, which is believed to be a Crusader’s resting place and, if so, would be one of the oldest gravestones.

To the west of the porch we see the head and shoulders of a man built into the outside wall. He was previously fixed above the Hulton Door and is known as the Fisherman of Deane probably symbolising the ‘fisher of men’ – the motto of Whalley Abbey.

As you walk around the exterior, notice the variety of stonework showing centuries of additions and alterations to the fabric, too extensive to be covered in detail in this brief guide.

At the Tower remember that it was originally the main entrance to the church.

The Pinnacles are relatively recent – having been added in 1844, the same time that the original hipped roof was replaced by the present flat one. Close inspection of the carvings show that the figures have protruding tongues – the one on the south east pinnacle being ‘the winner’! They were probably carved to match the earlier east wall pinnacles.

The original tower Clock had two faces. A replacement was fitted in 1816 and the present simple clock face was a further replacement in 1984.

The Weather Cock has a date of 1796 on its tail.

At the north west corner of the church, we are outside the present-day Vestry, added in 1823 on the site of the original Charnel House.

Round the corner to the North Wall we see the North Door from the outside, and can now see the weathered 13th century stonework.

At the north east corner are the newest windows lighting the new Chapel. Extensive excavation work was carried out here in 1985 to improve drainage and to drag back the soil and expose the original stonework.

Next we can see the impressive East Window from the outside – particularly beautiful at night with all the church lights on.

If you have time, look for the gravestones to the east of the church with a hand carved on them. These are the graves of the Huguenot Glovers – persecuted Protestants from France and Flanders who fled to this country in the 17th century, the Flemish wooden Sabot being claimed as the original Lancashire clog. Records are not much help in this respect, but it is an appealing and persistent belief.

Continuing around the church, returning to the south elevation, you pass the Hulton Door from the outside. This was a private entrance to the Hulton Chapel, although in 1766 the wardens petitioned the family to allow parishioners the right to pass through it. If you have already completed the interior tour, don't think your memory is failing you! The doorway was draughty and was built up during the 1884 restoration – on the inside only – leaving the original wooden door locked on the outside!

The Yew Tree near the door is a relative newcomer, being planted in 1965. It replaced a spreading yew of great age which is recorded on many old prints of the church, but which died in the early years of this century, being removed in 1964.

A few more steps along the south wall returns you to the Porch and the end of this short tour.

Conclusions

There is imply insufficient space in a booklet of this size to do full justice to Deane Church, its contents and surroundings, or to bring to life its many fascinating Incumbents and Parishioners who have taught or worshiped here throughout the centuries.

We hope, however, that we have been able to give the visitor a feel of the character of Deane Church and its congregation, and perhaps some understanding of why that congregation worked, and continues to work for the preservation of His House at Deane.

Acknowledgements

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Much of the text was gleaned from Dawson's *Deane Church* and Boardman's *Records and Traditions of Deane Church, Village and Parish*.