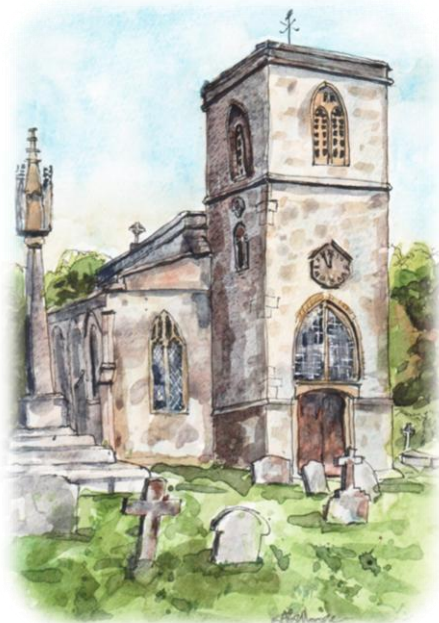


All Saints Church East Pennard



The Church

The present building dates from about 1420 AD and stands on the site of a tenth century church referred to in a charter of King Eadred dated 955. Aelfgitha, a nun, bestowed the estate of Pengeardmunster upon the abbey at Glastonbury. The Domesday Book, one hundred and thirty one years later calls the place Pennarminstre. Foundations of this church were discovered beneath the south aisle in 1932.

The main fabric of the church is in the perpendicular style of the 15th century and the tower is thought to be a little earlier. Pevsner refers to it as 'refreshingly blunt tower. Plain parapets, a west tower with a parapet, not even battlements, let alone pinnacles.'

The tower is eighteen inches to the south of the main axis of the church and appears to belong to the latter part of the 14th century, although it was partially rebuilt in the 19th century due to the weight of the bells!

The church consists of a clerestoried nave of four bays with aisles, a large chancel, south porch and western tower. The nave has a Somerset roof supported by angel busts.



All Saints Church is a Grade I listed building and worshippers have offered their prayers and praises to God on this site for well over 1000 years.

The South Porch

The porch is large and plain without windows. Near the east jamb of the door may be seen two scratch sun-dials. On the west wall of the porch is a tablet, now badly decayed, with records of the Chasey family. In the north east corner is a Holy water stoup, now badly worn. The original oak south door remains, with tracery on the outside and studded with large iron nails clinched on the inside. On the underside of the arch, on the west side is a mason's mark. The draw-bar holes inside the church still remain.

The Pulpit

Opinions differ with regard to the provenance of the beautifully carved pulpit. Pevsner states 'Early C18 with remarkably fine carving of leaves, flowers and fruit in the Gibbons tradition', whereas the Reverend G Wright who was the incumbent described it to the Somerset Archeological and Natural History Society as 'The handsome Queen Anne oak pulpit shows on one panel the split pea-pod, the sign manual of Grinling Gibbons'.



The Screen

The original screen across the chancel arch was probably removed at the Reformation and the steps leading to it were uncovered in 1933. The present screen was erected to the memory of Rev. Adam Godney who was vicar for 44 years. A Rood light would have been hung from the centre of the first free tie beam of the roof, the old iron pulley which supported and lowered the light can be seen on the pillar near the north door. In an extract from Rev. G Wright's "History of East Pennard" we are told 'Agnes Hole left four pence for the maintenance of this light in 1544 and a year later Thomas Corpe bequeathed half a bushel of wheat to the rood light'.

A Lady Chapel almost certainly stood at the east end of the north aisle dedicated to the Virgin Mary whose statue would probably have stood in the niche nearby.

The Font

The magnificent font dates from 1170. The carvings are unique and remarkable in their quality. The bowl is square, carved with an arcade of shouldered round arches.

It is supported by four carved figures round a short cylindrical column. These carvings probably represent 'harpies' - mythical creatures with the head and breasts of a woman and the wings and body of a bird like a vulture. The harpy was the attribute of Avarice, one of the seven deadly sins. In classical antiquity harpies were male or female birds of prey that snatched food from the table and fouled what they could not eat. They are sometimes seen in medieval churches as a warning against prostitution.



Four devils' heads are crushed beneath the base. These represent the sins that are expunged by Baptism.

All four sides of the bowl show marks of the hinges and locks which fastened the cover in medieval times. The font cover is of more recent date.

Mosaic

Situated behind the altar is a reredos of coloured tiles and mosaic dating from the 1880's, manufactured by Maw and co. of Shropshire. This has been recently restored.



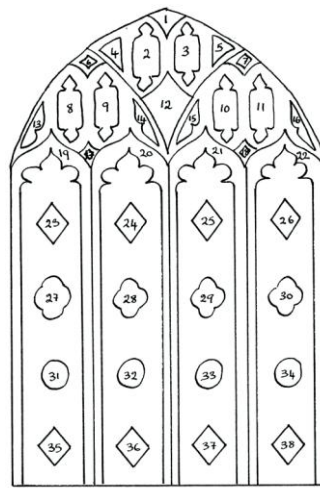
The Box Pews

An interesting feature of this lovely 15th century church is it's area of Box Pews to the north and south side of the Nave, created in the 1870s.

There are two types of box pews – three Manor House pews and the box pews which were erected by farming families from time to time for their own use.

The Manor House pews consist of three long low pews with doors, constructed in two phases circa 1840-50. These replaced an earlier high sided Manor House pew at the same location in the north aisle. The present Manor House pews were designed to display the wealth and prestige of the squire, whose family sat (and still do sit) in the front pew facing the body of the church. The indoor servants would have sat in the rear pew in their liveries which the low sides of the pew were designed to display.

The farmers' pews are of a variety of dates, the earliest being Jacobean. Each pew was associated with a particular farm or family. One pew was even left in a will of 1850 to the son of its owner resident in Tasmania



23, 24, 25 and 26 contain a patchwork of 15th century and more recent fragments. Each one contains a small head, probably of an angel, in the centre.

The medallions 27, 28, 29 and 30 were all placed in the window during the restoration in the 1840's. 27 shows the arms of the Napier family - Squires of the estate of East Pennard in the 1840s.

Medieval Wall Painting

Above the chancel arch is a rare medieval 'doom' painting depicting two angels swinging incense burners.



The Gallery

A new flight of stairs leads to the minstrels' gallery which was erected in 1842 and replaces an earlier one, and situated under the stairs are the recently installed disabled toilet facilities. On the front of the gallery are two old bench ends representing the pelican in her piety and the crown of thorns encircling the sacred initials. The pelican feeding her young with her own blood is a symbol of the Eucharist, Christ feeding his people.



In the gallery is an organ by Sweetland of Bath dated 1871 and in the north-west corner of the church, servery facilities have been integrated into the large corner box pew.

The East Window

A 15th century panel tracery with 4 lights and 6 tracery lights.

In the central tracery light (12) are the arms of Glastonbury Abbey which was the original possessor of the living.

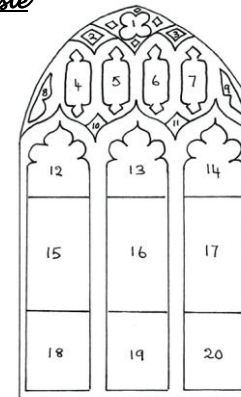
Tracery lights 2 and 3 are a jumble of 15th century fragments among which can be seen 3 lilies in a vase and an angelic wing – indicating a possible Annunciation scene.

The foils (19 and 22) contain lions' masks, crowns and 'flaming suns', the badge of Edward IV (1461-1465).

Stained Glass Window - South Aisle

The main lights 15, 16 and 17 show Christ calming the storm on the Sea of Galilee. In 15 Christ is seen on the shore and the disciples are appealing for help from their overladen boat. In 16 general panic and chaos is apparent in the sinking boat. In 17 Christ is seen walking on the water helping Peter ashore.

In 12, 14, 18 and 20 the roundels contain depictions of St Peter, St John, St Andrew and St James.

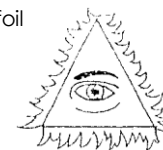


The tracery lights 4, 5, 6 and 7 each contain an angel in a devotional attitude wearing a white robe with hair and wings stained yellow.

The tracery lights contain a monogram. This appears to be a yellow 'G' entwined with a white 'I' and 'N' coloured brown and resembling a rope. The whole is surrounded by a circle of rope on a red background.



Centred beneath the middle foil in 13 is an equilateral triangle surrounded by flames containing a large human eye. This is probably a symbol of the Trinity, and the all-seeing eye of God Almighty.



Exterior

There are three scratch dials (medieval sun dials), one on the porch, one on the buttress to the west and another high up on the north aisle.



You may also be able to discern a number of holes bored into the masonry of the buttresses. These were used to attach small lead crosses to various parts of the building for a service of re-consecration. The church was re-consecrated in the 15th century

following a violent death in the building.

On the north side of the tower a rose emblem is carved into the masonry. This motif is the emblem of Glastonbury Abbey and is found on various buildings which once belonged to the monastery.

The Bells

These bells are the heaviest ring of five in existence. The peal is in the key of C# and the bells are dated 1649, 1607 (recast in 1971) and 1740.

Churchyard Cross

The base and shaft of the fine churchyard cross are medieval and the top is a more recent replacement. The cross now also serves as a War Memorial.



