



Upton Lovell

The Church of St. Augustine of Canterbury

Sir Stephen Glynne, whose notes were published in the *Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine*, wrote of the church in Upton Lovell, which he had visited in 1859 "This church has a nave and chancel with south porch and western tower. It is but small and uninviting." He may well have thought that, since in 1834 a restoration had been carried out which was considered by everyone to have been a monstrous desecration.

In 1891, however. A further restoration was carried out, this time by the architect C. R. Ponting. Ponting, who published his notes, felt strongly that the first consideration should be to preserve the special characteristics of the church, rather than to make any attempt to alter or improve it, and for him "this simple little church possess features of interest in two periods widely distant", which were the Norman/Early English characteristics of the chancel and the seventeenth-century reconstructive work in the nave.

Astonishingly many features, such as an aumbry, a piscine, and the bases of caps of the columns, were only revealed when, during the course of this work, plaster was removed from the walls. A brass, possibly of a priest, was discovered on the altar floor, and the twelfth-century font was rescued from the rector's garden.

"Our efforts were mainly directed towards remedying the damp and dismal condition into which the whole church had fallen, removing the mean and incongruous deal pews and gallery, the flat ceiling which concealed the nave roof, and the entire roof and east window of the chancel and replacing them with something more in keeping with the old work and it will be seen that a Seventeenth Century type has been followed for the fittings, as being the best period of English wood-work, as well as being in harmony with the 1633 portions of the structures."

The £600 required for the restoration was raised mainly by subscription, with £60 from a bazaar, and the church was reopened by Bishop John Wordsworth on 1 July 1892. In his sermon the Bishop spoke of the sacrifice the people had made, saying they had done something to make worship in the place more beautiful and seemly. He could remember very well going into that church and thinking how dark and dismal it was. Now it was bright, sweet and attractive, and he trusted that it would be the symbol of the love and faith which would find its centre there.



The Church in 1804 John Buckler (1770 – 1851)

(Transcribed from a portion of St. Augustine of Canterbury's Brochure)

Some Features in the Church of St. Augustine of Canterbury, Upton Lovell

The Font:

The font is 12th century. It is of Tisbury stone. The pedestal is of Bath stone on a slab of Pennant stone.



The Piscina:

Prior to the Reformation of the English Church in 1534, this church would have followed the practices of the Roman Catholic Church. A piscina was a small bowl often fitted with a drain in which the communion vessels were washed. The piscina is in the wall above the effigy of the knight.

The Aumbry:

An aumbry was a cupboard in the wall that was frequently found in medieval church. The dog-tooth moulding is characteristic of the Early English style of architecture.



The Brass:

The brass is believed to have been a priest. The ornament on the neck and sleeves of his robe and its pointed sleeves were rarely used after 1350, and the long wavy hair of the figure is a mark of early 14th Century brasses.

Effigy of a Knight:

The armour of this effigy of a knight has been dated as belonging to two different periods, c. 1380 and c. 1430. On the left upper arm there is some late fourteenth century writing and the date 1422. There is no record of who the knight was but it could be John, the 5th Lord Lovel of Titchmarsh, who died in 1408, or his son John, the 6th Lord Lovel, who died in 1414. Both were patrons of this church.



The Bells:

In 2006 the bells were restored which provided this rare opportunity to see them in detail. The earliest bell is dated 1619. For many years there were just three bells although there was a wheel of a fourth, and at restoration of the bells a fourth bell was added. The inscription on the bell reads:-

IN MURMURE APIUM GAUDEAMUS with two bees.

(Let us rejoice in the humming of bees).



The Corbels:

The corbel table is one of the first clues to dating the church. Take a walk around the outside of this church and look up at the north and south eaves of the chancel. The corbels are of three different types, all considered to be quite rare, and gives the c 1180 date for the church. The lancet window, the only one that remains, is another characteristic of the Early English style.

