

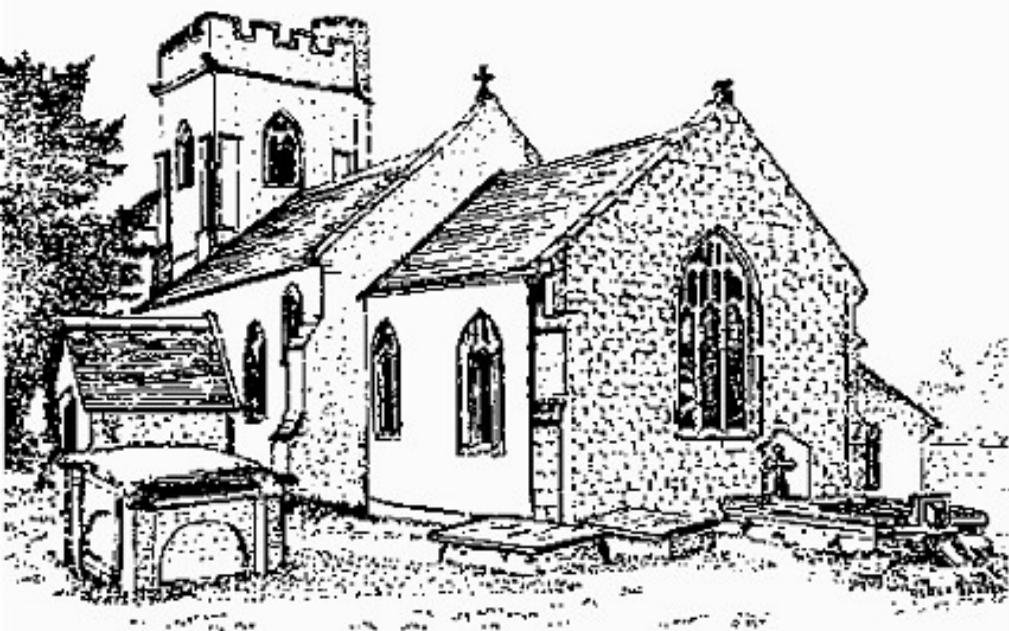
A Short Guide to

Thornfalcon Parish Church

Somerset

in the Diocese of Bath and Wells

Dedicated to the Holy Cross



15p

There was a Church on this site by the second half of the 13th Century; the font certainly belongs to that period and the first Rector known Simon de Insula, was appointed during November 1265 Most of the datable parts of the present building are the result of extensive alterations from the late 14th Century onwards, but the walls of the nave and the chancel may well contain some of the earlier work.

The alterations of the 14th century onwards include the windows of the nave and chancel the latest being those to light the former rood loft over the screen. The window over the pulpit still contains a fragment of its original glass the chancel may well have been rebuilt entirely during this period for

the arch is wide and high, well in the fashion when people were wanting to let in more light and to form a suitable background for the rood the figure of Christ on the cross with the accompanying figures of Mary and John which stood on the rood loft.



There may have been a plan, perhaps in the early 16th century, to rebuild the porch in Lie grand style with a room above it. This would account for the presence of the small doorway just west of the south door, originally designed as the entrance to the stairs.

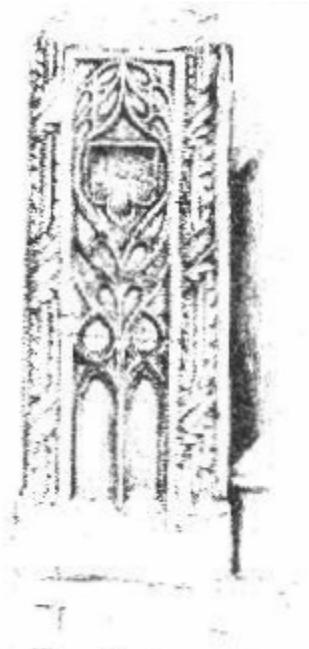
The latest significant addition was the tower which contains five bells, the oldest of these is dated 1609. The original iron clapper for the 1609 bell (replaced in 1904) was inscribed "HELLELUIAH" and deposited in the County Museum during 1905. Two other bells are dated 1683 and the remaining two bells were installed in 1904. At the same time much work had to be done to refix the bell cage and to support the belfry walls. The vast doorway is a fine piece of local carving in the golden shelly limestone from Ham Hill near Yeovil. a stone which contrasts well with the grey-blue of the local lias The nave windows have some nice Carving on their internal stops. The south door is a splendid piece of late medieval wood and iron work, and among the fine bench ends two are dated 1542 and some of the others are replacements dating from 1890. The majority of these replacements were carved by parishioners during the period 1890 to 1914 and a close inspection of some of these modern bench ends reveals a small brass plate affixed to the base inscribed with the name of the person who was responsible for the carving. One piece of carving, not easily seen, is the wall plate on the north side where the roof abuts on to the top of the nave wall This bears the letters WI (or J) LB C(hurch) W(ardens) 1652. Records have not survived to tell us the wardens' names as the Church Wardens' account books only commence in 1696. Other records include Baptisms from 1725, and Marriages and Burials from 1726.

A succession of rectors and vicars is listed in the porch. The earliest ones were usually appointed by the Acton family, those from the early 15th century by the Brook and Cheddar families, and those in the 16th and 17th centuries by the Capels. later the Lords Hadham. However, only one family as lords and patrons have left their mark on the church, namely, the Battens. Robert Batten was patron by 1791 and his family. later Chisholm Batten, has played a leading part in the village as well as the Church to the present day.

A monument in the chancel bears record to them as do the east and west windows. The restoration of the building in the 19th century, which included the removal of the gallery in 1882 and the lining of the nave roof with oak, was all their work. The funeral hatchment over the south door was inherited from the Scottish Chisholms through the marriage in 1843 of Edmund Batten with Jemima Chisholm. On the east wall to the right of the altar is a monument which bears an inscription to the Rev. Benjamin Jouxson, 24 years Rector of this Parish, who died in 1739 aged 72.

During 1901 a faculty was obtained to build a vestry but due to the death of the benefactor, Mr. C. Murless, this project was abandoned. however, in 1958 a new faculty was obtained and the vestry was fin ally built. The old door in the north wall (the excommunication door) is the means of access to the new vestry from the chancel. The Georgian pulpit) which was not made for its present location, replaced a stone pulpit which was emblazoned with Coats of Arms. Etc. the fine Elizabethan chalice, still in use, is dated 1573 and is stamped with the maker's mark I.P. Other silver includes modern ciboriun' im memory of Mr John Lock who died in August 1976. Three ancient pewter communion vessels, one of which is dated T.F. 1722, and a leather case were deposited in the County Museum in 1905. A further deposit was made in 1916 of a dish or bowl (dated 1727) which was used in the font until the latter was repaired in 1899.

The churchyard has the inevitable Yew Tree and one can only guess at its age. On August 23rd, 1853 the Vicar recorded on the flyleaf of one of the Registers "that a violent storm early this morning, thunder, lightning, wind and rain, great damage to the trees and orchards, 7 out of 15 walnut trees in the Churchard destroyed, only 2 with decent heads left". Outside the churchyard, adjacent to the South East corner, is the Pound.



If you have enjoyed your visit to our Church, we ask you to place a donation in the offertory box by the door, so that this place of worship may continue to be a part of the living Church.



This Guide was compiled by Mr. George Stokes (1981) and the illustrations are by Mrs Shirley Pippin. The help and advice given by Dr. R. W. Dunning in the preparation of this Guide is gratefully acknowledged.

The drawing of Holy Cross Church is taken from the original, dated 1837, in the Pigot Collection and is reproduced by permission of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society.

The present vicar is the Rev. D. Goodfield A.K.C. and the churchwardens are Mr. D.K. Small and Mr. A. T. Beesley

Before you go, pause awhile to pray in the communion of the saints. Find the Presence of the Lord and receive his Peace into your heart.