

Round and About in the Parish. All Saints Church

In July the Verger, Jennie Marten, who is also the Chairman of the Danehill Parish Historical Society, gave a very interesting and informative talk in All Saints church about its history.

Jennie mentioned the old Holy Trinity church which preceded All Saints church which was sited in the area just below the current church. Just below the current church there had once been a windmill until it burnt down and on the Tithe Map the land is shown as Windmill Field. This whole area has never been ploughed or had fertiliser applied. It is known as 'unimproved' and makes the ideal and, now rare, habitat for four species of orchids and a number of rare fungi. The land is carefully managed and Jennie ensures the grass is not cut until well into the summer so that the orchids have a chance to seed. If you walk across this area around the War Memorial in late summer you might well feel a dip underneath your feet. Below you are the vaults of the old Church which were dug out and covered over but in the drought of 1976 the soil settled once more and revealed clues as to its past. Perhaps the drought of 2018 might reveal even more.

I have been researching the Loader Diaries and on Friday August 30th 1895 Kenneth Loader (who was a teenager then) writes... "George, Winnie, Ruthie and I went in the handsome new church built after the old Norman Style in 1894, displacing the older church of the Holy Trinity. Outside it looks fat, burly, majestic and grand. Inside it is nice, cool, roomy and 'simply furnished' and contained an elevated organ on one side"... and Kenneth goes on to quote the Latin wording. Jennie pointed out to us the organ (a gift from Edward Wormald who was then at Chelwood Beacon) is central in the church, and placed high up. For a church of All Saints size, this is rather unusual and shows off the organ in all its grandeur. I have never known Kenneth's descriptions to be wrong - I wonder if the organ was later repositioned?

On Sunday September 1st 1895 Kenneth and another sister Mary go to Danehill church where they heard a sermon on Matt.18 and 20 "and a very good service". He says "There is a smaller separate chapel in the Church and round the top of it is written the first part of the Evening Chant "Magnificat" They have a curious sort of reading-desk. It is like a double one and turns right round in its stand. On one shelf



is the Old and on the other is the New Testament. Both are splendidly bound in thick dark green velvet and looked very handsome."

Jennie said that recent lighting improvements now showed off the handsome vaulted ceiling. The gilded bosses which had once been hard to distinguish were now clear, and they are well worth a look. Kenneth recites in his

diary the Latin wording which is around this area and when I was doing research I went into the church to try and read all of this for myself. Apart from getting a stiff neck by leaning my head backwards I couldn't work out very much at all. I have Kenneth's description and his translation into English and if anyone would like me to e-mail these details to them I would be only too happy to do so. Also it would be very interesting to know other people's wordings.

Jennie's family has a long history of association with the church. Her mother was also the verger, and her grandfather repaired some of the stained glass following bomb damage in WWII. He was unable to get an exact colour match so when you are in the Church look out for a small section which is bright blue - you have found the bomb damage. Also look out the the Wheatsheaf and the Black Tower in corners of some of the windows which are trademarks of the stained glass experts - C E Kempe and his assistant Mr. Tower.

Kenneth's diary now progresses to "Saturday August 22nd 1896". He says... "After dinner I walked to Dane Hill. I had my camera with me and took a distant view of Dane Hill church, resting my camera on one side of the road, near a bend in it. Just as I took the photo a cyclist came round the corner. He saw what I was up to directly but was too late to stop himself, and so, yelling "Hello" he sped quickly on out of the way of my work. However, he didn't seem to have appeared in the photo at all. I took another view of the church after this from the opposite side".



Whilst there are other photos showing the newly built church these two photos can be dated precisely to Saturday 22nd August 1896 and they were taken in the afternoon. These were amateur photos, as opposed to professionally taken photographs. They are

therefore unique.

The society would like to thank Jennie for all her hard work involved in researching and giving the talk.

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