

## The Mediaeval Church

Although the church is mediaeval, it is entered through a fifteenth century porch. Stone benches on either side were used to rest a coffin on before it was taken into the church for the Burial Service. On the right is a list of Rectors dating from 1220. The doorway to the church itself belongs to the early thirteenth century, and is built in the Early English style.

As you enter the church, one of the first things you see is the font. Fonts were symbolically placed near the entrance to the church, indicating that it was through Baptism that the new believer became part of the church.

The font is one of the treasures of the Church. A beautiful example of Decorated work of the fourteenth century, it is octagonal, with each panel, separated by a buttress, elaborately carved to show different styles of window tracery - Geometric, Decorated and Perpendicular. All the mouldings terminate with a small carved head - the faces, perhaps, of Barrowby villagers of long ago! It would hardly be surprising if, in the century that saw the Black Death sweep country, and reduce the population of Britain from around six million to less than two, people wanted to preserve an image of themselves, or those close to them.

Above the panels a frieze is worked, again a different design for each side. The base is formed with fruits and leaves, with a hollow stem. Through the ornamental perforations a three-headed monster can be seen in chains, perhaps suggestive of the restraint put upon evil through the power of baptism, or of the stonemason's hopes for salvation, both from the ravages of disease in this life, and from hell in the next.

The small lancet window in the west wall is probably the oldest in the church, dating from the early thirteenth century. Above it to the right a piece of stone, inscribed with a petal design, with an extension to the left, is from Saxon times.

At the West End is the Tower Arch of the fourteenth century. Above the arch can be seen the roof line which has been heightened.

There is no north door now as the thirteenth century doorway has been blocked up but the outline can still be seen. It now has the War Memorial for the 1914-18 War and was added to after World War II. The original use of this door would have been to allow direct access into the churchyard for burials.

Our artist's impression shows how the mediaeval church might have looked - no pews, of course, and lit only by candles, with the Rood Screen still in place.

Under the carpet of the chancel are three brasses:

Just in front of the sanctuary steps on the south side are brasses commemorating Nicholas Deene and Catherine (daughter of Walter Pedwardine) his wife. He is represented in a civilian gown with collar and cuffs of fur, with a purse suspended from his girdle. His hat hangs behind him. Catherine wears a butterfly headdress of the time of Edward IV. Her dress also has a collar and cuffs of fur. Below is a group of nine sons, but the daughters are missing. The inscription is partly missing - only: *Hic iacent Nicholas Deen et. . Octoly Anno dm milimo CCC . . is left. From documents of 1634-42 we know it read "Under this monument lye buried the bodyes of Nicholas Deen and Catherine his wife (daughter and herye of Waiter Pedwardyn) who died the eleventh day of October Anno Dm 1479". (3)*

On the north only one brass remains of the pair. It can be seen from the matrix, the man James Deene was in armour. He was the grandson of Nicholas Deene. His wife Margaret, daughter of William Armine, is wearing a mantle emblazoned with the family heraldic bearings over a dress with a chain belt. Her headdress is a lappeted cap of the time of Henry VII. Margaret married twice, her second husband was Sir John Markham, Knight. The inscription reads *'Of your charity pray for the soules of James Deen and Margaret his wife the which James deceassed the XXIX day of Aprill the yere of our Lord 1498 and the seyd Margaret died the XIX day of January the year of our Lord 1508 on whose soules thou have mercy. . . (the last word is missing).* Three daughters are below the inscription, the sons are missing.

Nearer the screen is a matrix of a knight in armour. In 1895 there were three: a knight with a lady in a butterfly headdress c1470 and two civilians with their wives. What became of the others is not known.

In the north sanctuary wall is an early-thirteenth century blocked up doorway once leading to the outside.

A tour of the outside of the church reveals more about the way our medieval ancestors worshipped and worked: on the west side of the porch doorway are three Mass Dials. These are a type of sundial used to mark the times of the church services before mechanical clocks began to be more commonly used in the fifteenth century. In medieval days the church walls were covered with a form of cement and limewashed both inside and outside. The mass dials were usually painted in the scratched lines; a metal rod called a gnomon projected from the central hole to cast a shadow.

A difference in stonework near the top of the west wall of the south aisle is where it was improved in the fourteenth century from being a lean-to construction to its present structure.

Moving towards the tower and west end you will see the frieze just underneath the roof line is decorated with ballflower and quatre flower carvings. The buttresses are of limestone as are the corners, the main stonework of the walls being ironstone. You don't have to dig for very long in Barrowby to understand why so many of the older buildings in the village are

built of ironstone!

The tower is built in three divisions, and the windows are of the Decorated style from the fourteenth century. Below the parapet are gargoyles for draining the water away, amidst variations on the quatre flower design. The octagonal spire rises from the tower and has two alternating storeys of lucerns. Two sculptured heads in balaclaver type headgear are at the base of the hood moulding of the west window in the tower. Access to the parapet is now severely limited by the bells, which obstruct the original spiral staircase, and the outside can only be reached by crossing a series of ladders across the top of the bells.

In the south wall, halfway up between the Decorated and Perpendicular windows and behind the drainpipe is the part of a Saxon Cross. It has been incorporated into the stonework. The east end of the panel bears an incised Greek cross, the remainder enclosed within a cable moulding is a simple strand of interlace with a loose end and two complete knots either side of a central arm. Nearby is the blocked up Early English doorway

A twelfth century stone coffin found in the nave of the church while work was being done early this century is by the porch. It is carved out so that a body could rest in it, with a special niche for the head. There is another, hollowed out circular stone artefact from the same period. This may have been an earlier font, or possibly, although less probably, another coffin, in which the body of a small child lay curled round.