

A History of St John, The Evangelist



Allerston, North Yorkshire



St John's Church

Allerston, North Yorkshire



History

The Victoria county History gives dates for this church as 14th century, with a 15th century Font and the Tower is early 15th century. Pevsner (1966) gives only styles of architecture, not dates, Decorated 1290-1350 for the Chancel, East end, and Perpendicular. 1335-1530 for the south Nave windows and the great West Tower. Building was presumably, from East to West. The font may be considerably older than the building. However the Ogee shaped door head occurs both over the Priest's door at the East-end, South, and the entrance door to the tower— suggesting one continuous style and therefore a date between 1300-1450. The Hastings family would presumably support the building next to their Manor House and two events may have affected the plans - the Scottish Invasion and victory at Bylands in 1322, and the Black Death in 1349. The Wars of the Roses followed in the 15th century. Wilton Castle, Ayton Castle and other fortified refuges for the Lord and villagers were built in reaction to the Scottish forays— the 20" thick East wall of the porch with its arrow-slit window suggests a church built to protect the people, although the decorated style windows relatively low to ground level would suggest a time of peace.

The original dedication was St Mary's and it is not known when the St John dedication arose. It was to distinguish Allerston's church from that of St Mary's at Ebberston. Pevsner used St Mary's in 1966 but it was known as St John's long before then. The two village churches were separated from the Parish of Pickering in 1252, but continued as a two-village parish until the 1980's with Allerston, the curates Church and Ebberston having the Vicarage. Allerston is now a separate parish within the Benefice of Thornton Dale, with Allerston, Ebberston, Wilton and Ellerburn formed in 2001 by Order-in-Council. The secular Parish Council covers Wilton and Allerston. Ebberston is linked with Yedingham.

A Guide for Visitors

A tour of the church begins with the Porch - the massive stone arch stones with a floriated cross stone overhead, leads us into the impressive porch, east wall already noticed above, and the carriage lantern on the west. The Church doorway has the half-blocked Holy water stoup on the right.

Entering the Church, your Hymn books and Prayer books are on the right and the Font on the left in its original position. If there was an earlier Church in Allerston— possibly destroyed in the "Harrying"—1069, by William the Conqueror, the font alone would have survived and be re-used 300 years later —-???? Go to the East end past the pulpit, noticing the corbels and piscina suggesting an earlier Altar and Screen position, and the tiny priest's door with "Ogee" head. The Sanctuary contains the piscina on the right and our East Window, in need of repair. !!

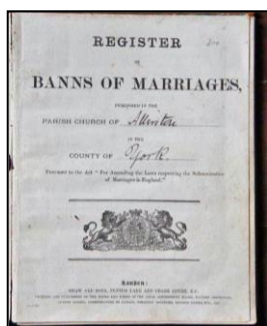


Returning down the centre aisle you pass the blocked north (Devil's) door on your right and notice the fragments of stained glass fragments -medieval— in the top lights of the North Window; can you make out "an angel's face" and sections of a staff in hand with a blank face— a Bishop?? Next come into the Vestry through the half-door in the screen. The three bell ropes hang down from the Bell-room in our magnificent Tower, recently repointed and redressed on the outside with help from English Heritage and the Historic churches fund, as well as £16,000 raised in the village. The bells— one a medieval one inscribed "Cantabunt et Anna" has a three-bell shield on it. The other two were recast in 1910, and ringers come from all over to add them to their achievements. The Tower door takes us outside to gaze at the huge Tower, suitable for a bigger church; fortunately the space enables us to offer coffee and biscuits after some services.

The Drain-heads outside, dated 1883 and Star of David remind us that the roof blew off in 1881. Re-used medieval stones of the 13th and 14th centuries can be found along the north wall and inset in the porch east wall. The ages of those commemorated can be guessed by size, a child to the west, a small adult to the east and the cross/sword a young man— from the Hastings family

Two items of note, for items not on show,

- the Chalice in regular use has been dated as 17th century,



- the Banns of Marriage book was begun in 1885 and is still in use. The registers, beginning in 1680, are held at the County Archivists in Northallerton and can be searched by arrangements there.

DONATIONS ARE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED
AS WORK IS TO BE DONE ON THE BELLS AND HEATING.

THANK YOU

WE HOPE YOU HAVE ENJOYED YOUR VISIT AROUND OUR CHURCH