



ST. PETER'S CHURCH

ILMER



Nr. Princes Risborough Bucks.

Price 50p

St. Peter's Church,

Ilmer

The parish, in which the Church stands, was variously spelt Illmire, Ilmere, Hilmer, and Ilmer. In the XIth century the noted Bishop of Bayeaux, Odo, was the Norman Possessor of the Manor of Imer, and Robert de Romenel held it, Addington, and other lands under him.

The Church is a small but interesting structure—one of the oldest extant in the Diocese of Oxford. The original building (traces of which may still be seen in the old doorways of the Nave) was erected in the Norman period; but it appears to have been rebuilt in great part in the old Perpendicular style, about the year 1350. About 1203 the advowson was given to Thomas Fitz Bernard to the Nunnery of Stodely, or Studley, Co. Oxon. In 1230, the church was appropriated by the nuns of Studley. After the Dissolution (in 1539) the King sold the rectory and church to John Croke Esq., of Chilton. The Dormer family, having acquired the manor, soon afterwards purchased the advowson, and the latter continued with the lords of the manor until 1858, when the Vicar, the Rev. W. E. Partridge, (also Rector of Horsenden) purchased it of the Earl of Chesterfield.

In 1662, a licence was granted to take down the aisle or vestry on one side, and to employ the materials in repairing the building.

The Rev. W. E. Partridge was appointed Vicar by the Earl of Chesterfield in 1834, and in 1858 he became, as above stated, patron of the benefice. The church having been for some time in a dilapidated condition, the Vicar resolved upon its restoration, and the work was commenced in the beginning of 1860. The chancel was rebuilt at the cost of the Rev. W. E. Partridge, and the nave restored also by that gentleman, and his wife, with the exception of £20 received from the principal landowners in the parish, and £15 from the Diocesan Church Building Society. The re-opening of the church by the Bishop of Oxford took place on the 30th of August 1860. In the late 1960's restoration and redecoration work costing over £1000 was done, funded by events organised by the parishioners.

In January 1978 an appeal was launched for £10,000 to reshingle the spire, repair the tower and restore the bells. Donations, grants and the proceeds of fetes and other events organised by the Appeal Committee totalled £8,000 in less than two years and most of the work was completed by the end of 1979.

Architectural Description

THE CHANCEL (17ft. x 14ft.), has an East window of two-cinque-foiled lights with a quatre-foil in a two-centred head, which has been restored, but the jambs are probably of the 14th Century. In the North wall are two windows, the Eastern a lancet with modern external stonework; the internal stones are probably original, but are covered with whitewash; the second window of the 14th Century is a trefoiled ogee single light with chamfered drop rear arch. In the South wall are also two windows; the Eastern, probably of late 14th Century date, is a trefoiled ogee single light in a square head; the single stone forming the head has a half-trefoil incised on each side of the light outside; the second window is a very small single light, with a trefoiled ogee head, apparently modern externally. The Chancel and Nave are divided by a low stone wall on which stands the rood screen. There is no Chancel arch.

THE NAVE (39½ft. x 16ft.), has in the North wall one window of late 15th or early 16th Century date, consisting of two cinque-foiled roundheaded lights, with sunk spandrels in a square head; the chamfered stone lintel is slightly cambered; the moulded external label has return stops; the 13th Century North doorway has chamfered jambs and two-centred arch, with moulded abaci and a modern label. In the South wall, at the East end, is an arch of two chamfered orders, dying into square jambs with chamfered edges, probably of the 14th Century; it originally opened into the former transept, and is now partly blocked and partly filled by a window of two lights, inserted late in the 18th or early 19th Century; west of the arch is a round-headed 12th Century doorway, now blocked; the jambs and head are apparently chamfered and have grooved and chamfered abaci. In the West wall is a trefoiled ogee window, possibly of the 14th Century, re-set or altered in the 16th Century; the wall is 4ft. 3 ins. thick and the North and South walls are only 2ft. 9ins. thick.

THE BELL TURRET retains the original timber framing, covered by modern weather boarding; the pyramidal roof and spire are covered with oak shingles. The moulded wall-posts rise from the floor of the Nave, and on the East side form an arch with curved struts and lintel; the four windows of the bell-chamber are partly original.

THE ROOF of the Nave has 16th Century collar beams with a moulded wall-plate on the North side.

FITTINGS

BELLS Three: first by Henry Knight, 1618, second by William Knight, 1586, third inscribed: Sancta Margareta Ora Pro Noblis, W.H., of pre-Reformation date, probably by William Hasywood.

FONT AND FONT COVER

Plain octagonal bowl, re-cut sides, rough stem, chamfered base, possibly 14th Century or earlier date, cover of oak, flat with central post and four ogee supports, probably late 17th Century.

PISCINA

In the Chancel with trefoiled ogee head, chamfered jambs, broach stops, 14th Century.

PLATE

Includes Cup and cover Paten of 1569.

ROOD SCREEN

On low stone wall, in Chancel, about 4ft. high of carved oak, doorway with four-centred arch and tracery, five bays on each side, with cinque-foiled round heads, with double roses, moulded rail at the top, possibly 15th Century or earlier date.

MISCELLANEA

On the inner jambs of North-west window of Chancel are two small carvings; in East jamb representation of the Trinity, in West jamb of St. Christopher, with staff broken, 15th or early 16th Century. The Chancel floor, ascending by three steps to the Communion table, is inlaid with Minton's best encaustic tiles, of various colours and dimensions; the reredos is of Bournemouth stone, inlaid with porphyry and marble; the litany-desk is of polished oak, with fleud-de-lis; the lectern is also of polished oak, and an exact copy of that in Eton College chapel; the pulpit, of oak, rests on a stone pediment, and is approached by three stone steps. In 1964 an oak communion-rail was added.

D.S.L. 1969
revised 1980