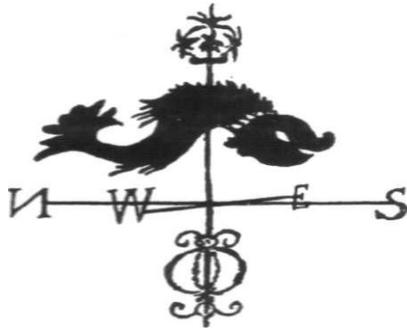


ST. CLEMENT'S CHURCH, POWDERHAM 1259---2011

There is a remarkable Mediaeval Weather Vane on the Tower in the shape of a Dolphin, which is one of the Courtenay Crests; this was very skilfully restored just prior to 1958 and again in 2011.

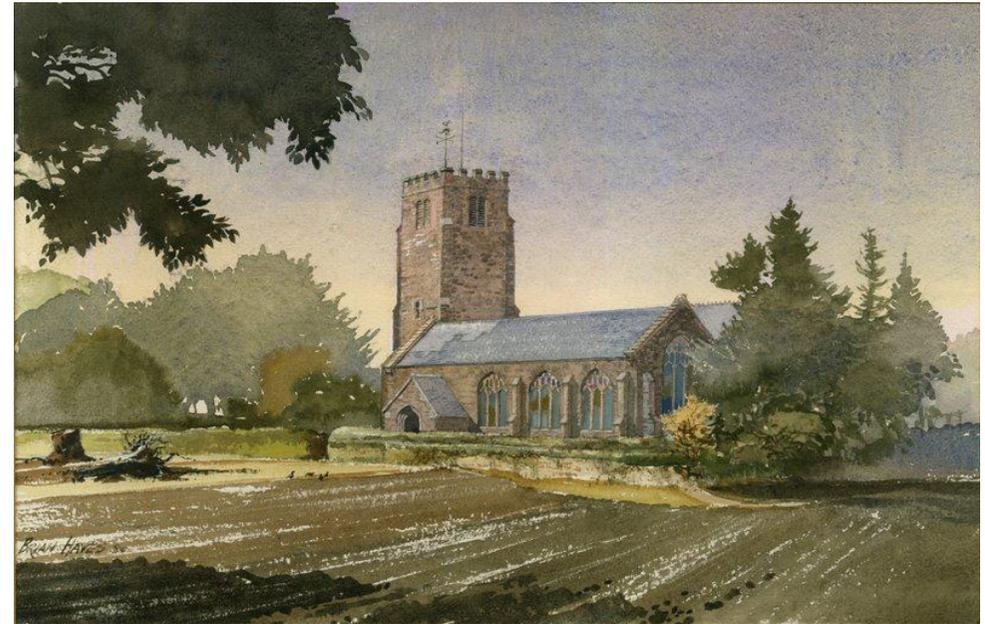


The Screen at the West End is possibly the original doorway of the old Rood Screen; the figures of Moses and Aaron on top of it appear to be ancient but it is not known where they came from. The plate-glass above the doors was erected when the church installed electric night storage heaters and is specially mounted to withstand the shock of express trains passing so close to the Church. High up on the North Wall and also on the South Wall opposite the aisle are Hatchments of the Earls of Devon. These Hatchments were hung in the Tower until recently.

The Church possesses some fine pieces of 'Commonwealth' Communion Plate; and there are also old Parish Registers - mostly in very good condition - for Burials, Marriages and Baptisms, dating 1558, 1559, and 1575, respectively. (These now reside in the Devon County Records Office in Exeter.)

WE HOPE YOU HAVE ENJOYED YOUR VISIT TO THIS LOVELY OLD CHURCH A BUILDING LISTED BY THE GOVERNMENT AS OF ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL MERIT. BUT WE, THE PARISHIONERS, HAVE ALWAYS REGARDED IT AS THE "HOUSE OF GOD" AS HAVE OUR PREDECESSORS. WE ARE A TINY PARISH – NOT TOO PROUD TO ASK FOR HELP IN TRYING TO DISCHARGE OUR RESPONSIBILITIES. WE WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR ANY CONTRIBUTIONS PLACED IN THE RESTORATION FUND BOX IN THE WALL OPPOSITE THE FONT. THANK YOU.

Sketches prepared by Rev'd J. B. Pim in 1958. Photographs by Dr. G. Langley.



Original watercolour by Brian Hayes 1986, reproduced by kind permission of his daughter, Mrs. Gomall

POWDERHAM must originally have been 'Polderham', which meant the Village on the Marsh (c.f., the Dutch 'Polder'), and can still be found spelt 'Pouldrum' in a document of 350 years ago; at that time there were fields to the east of the Church, but erosion from the sea has washed this land away, and the River Exe has been widened to its present extent.

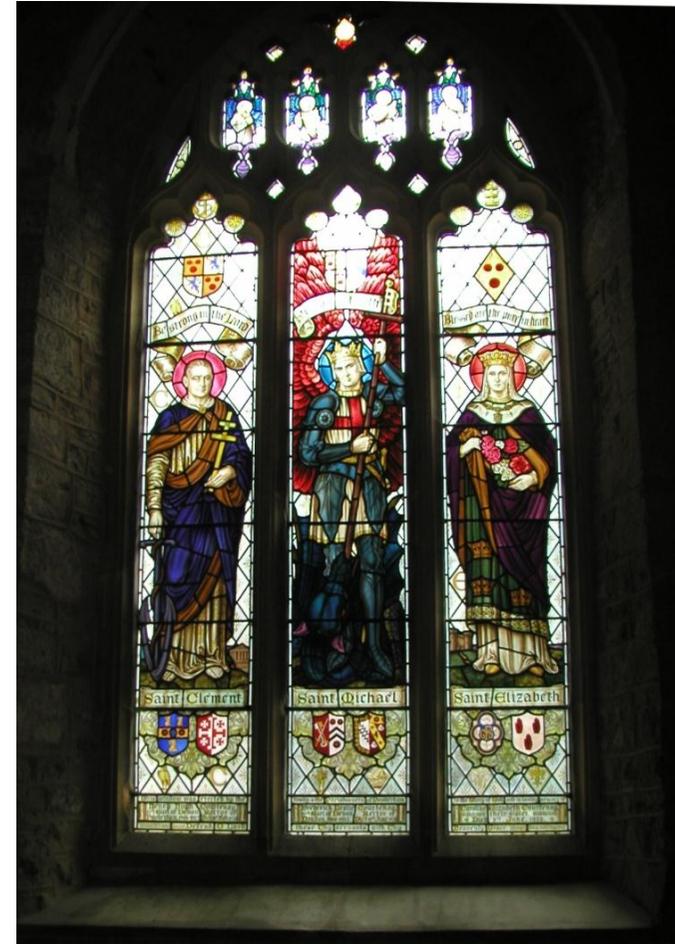
There may have been a little Saxon church on the site, but we have no record of it. The first Rector was appointed in 1258, and a list of the Rectors since that date may be found on the North wall. The Church was consecrated by Bishop Walter Bronescombe on 24th November 1259. It is dedicated to ST CLEMENT, who was an early Bishop of Rome and the author of several Epistles to the Church of his own time. He was martyred in the reign of the Emperor Trajan (c.53-117), and tradition is that he was drowned in the sea with an anchor fastened to his neck.

A fouled anchor is his emblem and appears in the Church and also in the corner of the St. George's Cross, which is flown on the Tower on special occasions.



The original walls of the Church are still standing in the North Aisle which is the oldest part of the building. It was restored and rebuilt in the XVth century by Sir William Courtenay and his wife Margaret, who erected the Nave and South Aisle; they were buried in the Church, though no trace of their tomb survives.

The Window in the N.W. Corner - to three members of the Courtenay family who died within a few months of each other - is a good example of modern glass; it is well designed and full of interesting points: the three faces are portraits: the figure on the left is that of Henry the 15th Earl, who had been Rector of Powderham; that in the centre Frederick, the 16th Earl, who had been Rector of Honiton; and they both represent the Saints of their respective churches; the third figure is their sister, Caroline; the Heraldry is well worked out, the Shields in the lower panels referring to their School and University careers.



The lower portion of the SCREEN, with the old painted Panels, probably incorporates the old Rood Screen; but it had become very dilapidated, and was taken right across the Church, and the upper part completed by the generosity of a Parishioner in 1881.

A memorial Chapel had been made at the East End of the South Aisle to ELIZABETH, Countess of Devon, wife of the 11th Earl, who died in 1867, but the position of her Monument and the whole appearance of this Chapel were altered when the Organ was placed there in later years; The Organ had previously stood in the North-East Corner, which then reverted to be the Family Pew of the Earl of Devon, on the East wall of which will be found a bronze plate which commemorates all the members of the Courtenay Family buried here, but who have no other memorial

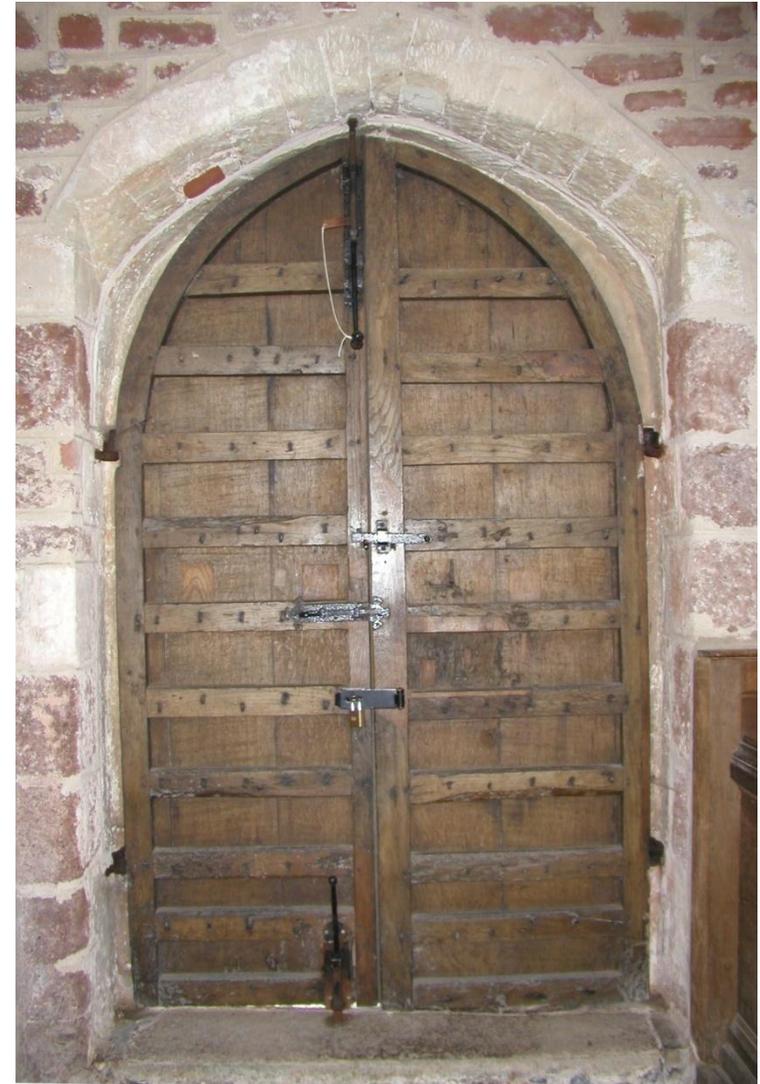
The History of the Church is displayed in miniature on the capital of a pillar near the Organ; the Courtenay Arms impaled with Bonville - the Swan which was the Badge of de Bohun - and the Boar which was one of the Courtenay Crests: the de Bohun family were the original owners of the Manor of Powderham - the Courtenay family came into possession of the land in the XIVth Century - and Sir William Courtenay and Margaret Bonville, his wife, were the pair who rebuilt the Church.



There were at first three Bells, of which the Tenor, dated 1696 is the only one remaining; the other two were recast, and three others added, to make a Ring of Six in 1887.

The only piece of old Glass left is the remnant of a XV Century Window let into the plain glass of the window near the Vestry.

The Door opening into the Church from the South Porch is very old; the Sanctuary ring on the outside of the door (still in its original position) is history in itself, if one remembers the dispute over Civil and Ecclesiastical Courts, King Henry and Becket. Anyone fleeing from State Law Officers who could reach and grasp the handle of the Ring could claim sanctuary and the right to be tried by Ecclesiastical Courts.



The (repaired) holes in the doors were made by Cromwellian troops under General Fairfax when the church was held and fortified by them for a short space of time during the battle for Powderham in 1645. The position became untenable and they were forced to retreat across the river Exe. A local carpenter of the time made an excellent repair job.



On the South Wall 'between the organ and the South Door is a list of churchwardens from 1639-1922.

In old days a ROOD SCREEN ran across the Church about the line of the first pillars: the door which gave access to the top of it can still be seen in the wall over the Vestry door. What was the old doorway now houses the Banner of No. 21 Branch, Normandy Veterans Association which was laid up in 1994. This Banner, together with the plaque just below to the right, commemorates the N.V.A. association with St. Clement's Church.

We know that up to about 170 years ago there were square pews along the walls on both sides; the centre was clear, and across the West End was a Gallery in which instrumentalists and singers were accommodated; a little later a small organ was placed at the West End, but no trace of any of this can be seen now.



Up to 1861 the East End of the Church was in one straight line with the ends of the two sides Aisles, but in that year the CHANCEL was extended to form the present SANCTUARY.

There are two Monuments in the Sanctuary, the new one on the south side is based on a Courtenay Tomb in Colyton Church; the other - the ancient stone figure on the north side - is a very fine example of early work; there has been some speculation as to whom it represents, but it is probably a Cenotaph to ELIZABETH, daughter of Edward I. She married Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford, and when their daughter Margaret married the second Earl of Devon, the Manor of Powderham came to her as part of her marriage portion; their son Philip built the Castle; it seems reasonable that they placed the Monument in the Church in memory of their royal Mother; Elizabeth de Bohun who died in 1316 and this fits in with the character of the dress in the Monument. This Monument was moved up from the Nave and a plaque behind the left hand pillar dates the building of the extension.