

Salisbury Diocesan Report 1930

JUNE, 1930.

SALISBURY DIO.

"I visited yesterday (May 13th) the old disused little church at Winterbourne Tomson, which the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings have gratuitously undertaken to repair and met there their architect and secretary, Mr. Powys. He admitted that from unavoidable circumstances the work of stripping and repairing the old 15th century roof last year had been delayed, but that the work would now go forward and, given fine weather, should be completed by the end of June. The work of removing the old perished deal flooring under the 18th century oak pews and lowering them to their original position on to the Purbeck paving will then be put in hand. Afterwards some reparations to the external walls and buttresses undertaken and finally when the building has been made sound and weather-proof, and as the funds at the disposal of the Society allow, the internal repairs will be tackled. The repairs to the old 15th century roof have been no means easy. The old couple close rafters had largely perished and been strengthened at some later date by deal spars. These latter are now being removed and oak substituted, to which the original rafters are being bolted. Inside some interesting features have come to light. The internal plastering on the walls probably put on in the 18th century has been found to overlay the early mediæval coating on which traces of colour and gilt have been found, and a small 13th century lancet headed Window has been discovered embedded in the south wall. Finally, I should like to testify to the skill and loving care Mr. Powys is gratuitously giving to the work now in progress.

Letter from Powys to Salisbury DAC
Nov. 1931

5th November 1931

To
H.L.G. Hill Esq.,
Salisbury D.A.C.
Donhead Cottage
Donhead St. Mary
Shaftesbury.

WINTERBORNE TOMSON CHURCH

I have pleasure in returning you your drawing of
Winterborne Tomson Church which has been carefully kept
here.

The work at Winterborne Tomson was much more expensive
than I had expected and more than half of the capital of the
Hardy Fund was used in the repair of this church.

The chief works were the repair of the roof, the repair
of the seating, and a slight extension of the churchyard on
the north side. The estimate made for the work was based
on the assumption that the old timbers of the fifteenth
century roof could be repaired. When the roof was stripped
it was found that they were in a very rotten state, that the
tiles were carried by new deal rafters put up in the first
quarter of the eighteenth century, which themselves were

defective. It was decided to put in new oak rafters of scantlings like those used in the Mediaeval ages, to retain what was left of the fifteenth century timbering on the ground that it carried the wagon ceiling and ribbing, and to arrange the new rafters as far as possible so that should the ceiling be removed at any time in the future the timbering above would not be disagreeable to see. What was left of the old timbering was supported from the new rafters. The tiles were carried on stout oak rent lath nailed to the new rafters with copper nails, for which purpose each lath had to be bored and the old tiling was taken off, relaid and made out with other tiles. The ceiling itself was repaired. The mediaeval bosses were found to be in a rotten state, were fixed to thin pieces of oak board, stopped with wax and refixed to the roof. In the repair of this roof more decaying old oak timbers were left both visible and invisible after thorough saturation with insecticide than would have been done in a church which was in constant use. During the repair of the roof the opportunity was taken to insert a new tie beam from wall head to wall head and the attachment of the early eighteenth century tie beam to the wall heads was secured and a ferro-concrete beam was laid between the wall plates all round the church so as to ensure the continuous and permanent resistance of the thrust

Sheet 2 to Mr. Hill

of the roof. The bell ^{te}code was remade and the bell re-hung.

The seats were all taken up and repaired where they had rotted and there was much rot in the bottom of the styles, and rails and panels. These were repaired in dry oak and the seats were replaced on the stone paving ^{wood} without the raised floor, and the back of the panelling against the wall was painted two or three coats to increase the duration of the oak.

The musicians gallery at the west end of the church, which in reality is the old rood loft in a new position, was carefully repaired. The beams and panels of this loft were rotten and some of the panels had to be renewed and the beam was strengthened with a new oak piece which now carries the weight.

The windows were all reglazed in crown glass with lead calms arranged as they had been, and the church is left clean and in proper repair.

A service in commemoration of this work is to be held in the coming Spring when the Archdeacon of Dorset has promised to preach.

Through the generosity of the owner of the Manor Farm, Mr. Hooper, the Society was permitted to enclose some six feet of his farmyard in the churchyard so that now

it is possible to walk all round the church without trespassing in the farm.

On the north side of the church there is a piece of interesting evidence regarding the original mortar finish of the joints. It will be remembered that the church dates from the first half of the twelfth century and it is believed that these joints belong to that period.

There is evidence that this is so from examination of the square headed Norman doorway in the north side of the church, which is now blocked up by a mediaeval stone buttress. This mortar jointing is not flush as in later mediaeval work, but is ribbed, the upper and under side of the joints being cut back so that the main joint takes the form of an inverted V. Similar pointing exists at Wolversey Palace and projecting ribbon pointing has been noticed on the inside of other contemporary buildings in England. In southern Germany military buildings of this date show that the original pointing is of the same form as that at Winterborne Tomson. ^{It is not} ~~I do not suggest~~ that this evidence justifies the use of such pointing in contemporary repairs, and it was not used at Winterborne Tomson.

You are at liberty to use any of the blocks we had made for reproduction in our Annual Report, and it is hoped that next year illustrations will be shown of the finished work.

ARP

Secretary.