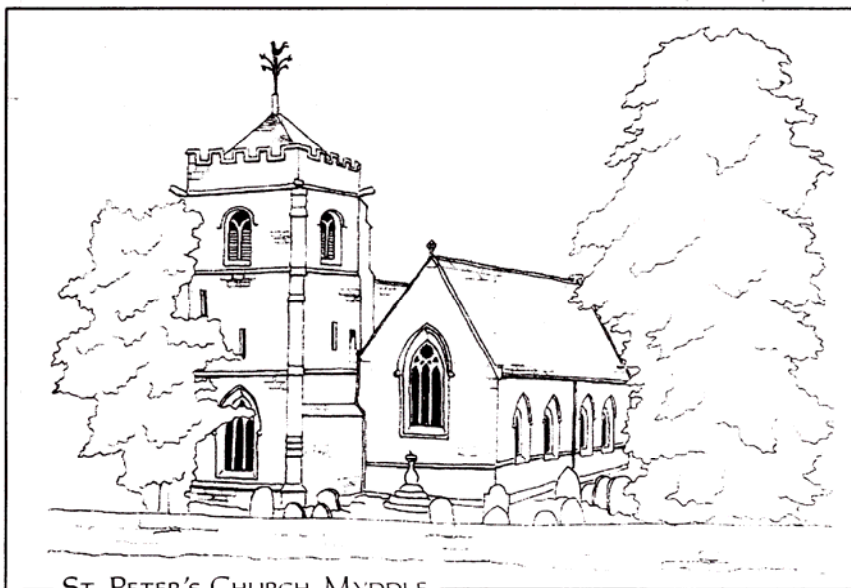


Welcome to

# St Peter's Church

## Myddle Shropshire

A short history of the church



ST. PETER'S CHURCH, MYDDLE

## ***The Church of St. Peter, Myddle, Shropshire***

The Church, like the Manor and village, was a Saxon Foundation, with a Parish of great extent, and was given originally to Shrewsbury Abbey by Warin the Bald, a Sheriff, who was dead before the date of the Domesday Survey of William I, and this gift was never disputed. Earl Roger de Montgomery's 'Confirmation' of the gift to the Abbey states that Warin Vicecomes had given "the Church of Muthla and the Tythe of the Vill" to the said Abbey, but it was never appropriated by the Monks (see Eyton's *Antiquities of Shropshire*). In the Ecclesiastic Taxation Documents of 1291 its revenues stood at the then large sum of £20 10s per annum, of which the Monks of Shrewsbury drew only a pension of 10s !

It was one of the four Great Churches at the western extremity of the Lichfield Diocese, which passed at an early period to the Patronage of Shrewsbury Abbey. The other three were the Churches of Baschurch, Great Ness and Oswestry.

There are no remains of the earliest Church on this site, nor of the Saxon building, and it is unlikely that any part of the present building is earlier than the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Gough says that it was very dilapidated during the incumbency of Rector Ralph Kinaston (1596 – 1629) and "Mr Kinaston offered to pay for the rebuilding of the Tower in stone, to the height of his stature, and to place a stone at that height to mark his gift, but the parishioners would not agree"! Mr Kinaston died shortly afterwards and is buried on the left of the altar. When part of the steeple fell the parishioners were forced to rebuild the whole Tower themselves. This was done, Gough says, "about his time" (he was born in 1634). The mason who carried out the work was John Dodd, who is said to have received £5 for every yard built from foundations to battlements !

Cranage, author of *Architectural Account of the Churches of Shropshire*, says that the Tower, built around 1634, is very much of its period. "The upper windows are of two lights, without cusps or tracery. The other openings are plain slits, except for the lower west window that is modern. The battlement is of the Perpendicular type. The gargoyles are of a debased form and so

is the plinth molding. High in the south wall is a depressed arch doorway, probably once a means of access to the aisle roof. The lower part of the south wall is much thicker than the rest and the stonework looks older. It is probably a survival of the mediaeval Tower.”

The Church, as in Gough's day, has a nave and a south aisle of four bays. The arches and columns are Norman. The body of the church was rebuilt in 1744 and there is a stone Tablet recording this on the outer wall to the left of the North Porch. Cranage says this is recorded in the *Parish Book of Middle 1691 – 1731*, which may be in the Archives of the County Records Office in Shrewsbury. £1,120 was asked for in the Brief issued in 1742/3 but only £169 18s 9d was received ! The rebuilding actually cost £255.

In 1857-58 the Church was closed and services were held in the school. Restoration of the nave and aisle took place: the Tower was opened to the nave, forming the present Baptistry, and a new Font placed in it. The Church was re-roofed, with sound roof timbers being used as joists to support the new wooden floor. The windows were filled with decorated tracery (converted from Georgian to Victorian Gothic), and a large window was inserted at the West end of the aisle. The north doorway and porch plus a new vestry were built at this time. The Tower was opened to the nave, and the old gallery removed. The present day pews were installed in 1857 – 58. The backs are 18<sup>th</sup> century split oak adapted from wainscotting on the old box pews. The aisles were tiled with Minton's encaustic tiles.

The Chancel was again restored, and the Organ chamber built in 1877. The present altar and Communion rails also date from this period of restoration.

The flooring of the vestry and the organ chamber was renewed in 1983 when it was found to be in a dangerous condition

N.B. A complete list of recent refurbishments is contained on the back cover of this booklet.

## ***Objects of Special Interest in the Church.***

Cranage says that the number of Brasses in this church is remarkable. The oldest is to be found on the floor (under the carpet) on the south side of the Chancel, and commemorates Arthur Chambre of Petton who died in 1564, his wife and two children. The reason for this memorial in Myddle Church is given by Gough, who says, "The Advowson of Middle Church did formerly belong to the ancient and worthy family of the Chambres of Petton", meaning that the patronage or 'living' was in his gift. The Brass shows him in ruff and fur lined gown, while his wife wears the "Mary Queen of Scots" cap and ruff. There are small effigies of a son and daughter, and one shield of Arms.

The next in date is the Brass commemorating Rector Ralph Kinaston, who made the offer to build the Tower, and died in 1629. Gough says, "He lies interred in the Chancel, in the passage that goes out of the Chancel into the middle of the Church, under a gravestone, with a brasse upon it", and is described as "Prebendary of St Asaph's, Chaplain to King James and Parson of Middle" – again under the carpet.

Near this monument on the floor and the north wall, are five small brasses, dating from 1651 onwards. There is another on the western column of the Arcade, and one on the south wall of the aisle. Several of the names on these monuments appear in Gough's writings. On the north wall of the nave are several memorial Hatchments of the Atcherleys of Marton. One of their properties, the *Tan House*, on the banks of the stream crossing the road from Marton to Baschurch, is still in occupation, having been very well restored in recent years. The Brass cross on the south wall of the chancel was erected to the memory of the Rev. Preb. G H Egerton, the Rector of Myddle for no less than fifty-eight years, who died in 1905.

A large brass plate in the Chancel, above the door to the Vestry, is inscribed to the memory of Mary, Lady Marjoribanks, the wife of Preb. G H Egerton. It records that she made many improvements in the church, probably including the gift of the Organ, which was built in 1877 by William Hill. It is unusual in having a console of only one

manual, with the black and white keys in the reverse positions (i.e. ebony naturals and ivory sharps). The original stops are inscribed in Latin.

On the wall, near the main door, there is a remnant of a 'Ducking Stool', a square seat with arms. There is no sign of the pole or wheels. It would have been used (if necessary !) in Marton Pool, but there seems to be no mention of its use in Gough's book.

In the south aisle, near the door to the south porch, is a large oil painting of St Peter, the Church's Patron Saint. It is an 18<sup>th</sup> Century painting of the Italian school, artist unknown, and was restored in 1991.

Massive boards on the walls of the vestry and the south porch record the various Charities of the Parish. A much more recent addition is a 'Collage Portrait' of Richard Gough on the wall by the safe, the work of Linda Taylor, a pupil of Myddle C.E. Primary School, made in 1966. Also in the vestry is an old chest with three locks, possibly the Parish Chest mentioned by Gough.

There are three very ancient books, in a glass case on the wall to the left of the main door, with remnants of chain attachments. In the Baptistry, the carved octagonal font is modern, and the font cover is made of olivewood from the Holy Land, said to be the work of the last Rector Egerton.

The Royal Arms of 1775 can be seen over the Tower Arch.

To the left of the Altar, on the North wall of the Chancel, is an Aumbry - a secure cupboard - in which are placed the Bread and Wine for Communion Services.

In the south aisle, a row of pews has been removed to provide a "Community Area" and, at the rear, a kitchen, storage facilities and a toilet have been provided.

In the north Porch is a framed *List of the Rectors of Myddle*, spanning the years from the 1100's to the present day.

## *The Church Bells*

There are three bells in the tower which are rung from the Baptistry. Following a successful Bell Appeal, the Belfry was strengthened and the bells were re-furbished in 1993/4.

The TENOR BELL on which the clock strikes was cast in 1668. An inscription reads: *Rich Gough, Will Formesyon - Caeterus voco ipae non intro. (others I call, myself remain outside)*. This bell was cast by Thomas Clibury II of Wellington and weighs approximately 8½ cwt.

The SECOND BELL has no date. An inscription reads: *Petrus Apostolus et Paullus Doctor Tenorum (Peter the Apostle and Paul Doctor of the Gentiles)*. This bell is now believed to have been cast in a Staffordshire Foundry by Michael de Lichfield possibly as early as the year 1280 and weighs approximately 6½ cwt. It would appear to be the original Bell of the former Church building and to be some 350 years older than the Tower which was rebuilt in 1634. This bell has a preservation order on it.

The TREBLE BELL has an inscription which reads: *Edward Hamnor and Adam Dowbee Churchwardens 1715*. This bell was cast by Abraham Rudhall of Gloucester in 1715 and weighs approximately 5½ cwt.

## ***Work undertaken at St Peter's Church since 1991.***

- 1991 Restoration of the painting of "St. Peter's Denial of Christ".  
Rewiring of the Church
- 1992 Installation of five single lancet stained glass windows  
from Harmer Hill Church.
- 1993/4 Refurbishment of the three bells in the Tower.
- 1994 Installation of the aumbry
- 1995 Total renewal of the central heating installation  
The removal of some pews  
Carpeting of the Church  
Installation of the kitchen and toilet.
- 1996 Installation of new linings to stone trough eaves gutters.  
Re-roofing and re-leading of the vestry and organ  
chamber.
- 2000 Installation of the Millennium tapestry, worked by ladies of  
the Harmer Hill Craft Group.
- 2002 The sandstone masonry of all external walls (except the  
Tower) repaired and repointed.
- 2004 Side churchyard gate repaired with new posts, all  
woodwork treated and stained.  
All roofs (except that of the vestry) stripped, felted and re-  
slated, etc.  
All internal walls redecorated.  
All memorials, hatchments, etc. overhauled and  
refurbished.  
The porch re-roofed, re-lined and decorated.
- 2005 Vestry repainted, redecorated, and all woodwork re-  
stained.  
New carpet laid in the vestry.