

RE-OPENING OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN 1879



St Mary the Virgin, 1918

After complete restoration, the Parish Church of West Knoyle was re-opened on Thursday. It is a small building in the Early Perpendicular or Third Pointed style of architecture, with a handsome tower, and is now one of the neatest, prettiest, and most complete churches in the diocese.

The tower has not undergone very considerable repair and the original features of the church have been retained as far as possible, some of the old windows having been repaired and kept almost intact. The porch has been entirely rebuilt, but it is mainly constructed of the old materials. The church has been newly roofed and the bells in the tower have been re-hung. The ceiling of the nave is of open timber work, and that of the chancel of pitch pine, panelled. The chancel is fitted with carved oak benches, and there is new tile flooring. A finely carved oak reredos and a new and handsome carved oak pulpit have been placed in the church, to which a comfortable vestry and an organ chapel have been added. There is also a new font of Bath stone. In the work of restoration, which has been well carried out, local or Tisbury stone has been chiefly used. The amount expended on the work reached about £1,800 including some special gifts, among which are the following:

Organ	Miss Chafyn Grove
Pulpit	Mr C R Godwin
Font	Rev & Mrs E Inman
Chancel and Pulpit lights	Lady Hoare
Two Chancel Windows and Font Pillar	Mrs Starkey
Altar	Mr G B Troyte-Bullo9ck
Altar Cloth and Alms Bag	Mrs Bullock
Candlesticks &c	Bishop Tozer
Altar Desk	Communicants of West Knoyle
Alms Bag and Altar Linen	Miss Awdry
Lectern	Miss Browne
Litany Desk	Mrs J Hicks
Lectern, Bible and Prayer Book	Children of West Knoyle
Hymn Book	Miss E Judd
Cushions	Mrs Vaughan Williams and Mrs Sweet

It is understood there is a debt of about £120 remaining. Mr J M Allen, of Crewkerne, was the architect; Messrs Osborne and son, of Shaftesbury, and Mr Davis, were the builders and Mr T Osborne executed the wood carving. A piece of ground about 30 yards in length and 20 feet in width has been taken into the churchyard.

The re-opening service was held at half past eleven o'clock and there was a crowded congregation, notwithstanding that shortly before the hour named there was a heavy storm of sleet. The service was full choral, the West Knoyle choir being assisted by several choristers from Wilton, and the signing was good. Mr J Goulden, of Wilton, presided at the harmonium.

The Clergy present included the Bishop of the diocese, Bishop Tozer, Ven. Archdeacon Lear, the Revs W Moberly, E Inman, F Ralkes, R Tudor, L K Hilton, R N Milford, Canon Sir J E Phillips, Bart., Dr Burrows, J Deane, F R Sidebottom, Canon Tower, L R Henslowe, W H Whiting, E B Edgell, C W Taylor, W Reece, H E Chapman, H Glyn, T Wilkinson, J H Ellis, H J Medycott, W Milles, G B Oldfield, C H Cholmeley, and Canon Olivier.

Archdeacon Lear read the Gospel and the Rev W Moberly the Epistle. The sermon was preached by the Bishop of the Diocese, who took for his text the words "Verily I say unto you, wheresover this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her" (Mark xiv, 9). There was an offertory at the close in aid of the restoration fund. Holy Communion was administered and the additional portion of the churchyard was afterwards consecrated.

Subsequently luncheon, provided by the Rector (the Rev E Inman) was served in a barn (prettily decorated), lent by Mr R C R Godwin, and a large party of ladies and gentlemen sat down. The Rector proposed the health of the Bishop, and said that when his lordship came amongst them there was no one they were more glad to see (applause).

The Bishop, in responding, said he felt himself more at home in the diocese than he did ten years ago. Wherever he went he had from the first been treated with the utmost possible cordiality and kindness but he must, in some measure, attribute their regard to his office and not to himself. It was the second time he had had the pleasure of visiting West Knoyle.

The first time was three and a half years ago and to tell them the truth, it then seemed to him that he was coming into a wilderness (laughter). He did not know where it was, and he was not aware that West Knoyle knew much about bishops; at all events, it was a long time since a bishop had been there. When he first visited the village there was a most interesting confirmation, and in that small parish some 40 or 50 persons were confirmed, and many of them were more than 60 years of age. There was no public house in the place, no dissenting chapel, and the people seemed to live in the most primitive state of simplicity and innocence it was possible to conceive. He could not forget the welcome he then received.

Speaking of the Church, he said they should remember that they were not a newly instituted church; not a thing of 300 years ago. They were a Reformed Church, and he thanked God for it with all his heart; but they were the lineal heirs and descendants of those great and good men, some of whom were at least as good and great, if not better and greater, than they were, and whose names had to a certain extent been, if he might use the expression, sat upon (applause). He proposed the health of the incumbent and churchwardens.

The Rev E Inman, in replying, said there were not many cottagers in the place who had not contributed £1 or £2 - some, more - towards the restoration of the church. Mr R C R Godwin also responded and said, with regard to the churchyard, that he had not heard a word to the effect that anyone's feelings were wounded, or that a single complaint had been made that any remains had been ruthlessly disturbed. He proposed the health of Bishop Tozer, who replied. The health of the architect, Mr J M Allen, was proposed by Mr G B Troyte-Bullock, and acknowledged.

There was even-song at half past three. Canon Sir J E Phillips (Vicar of Warminster) preached the sermon.

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