North Ferriby, All Saints

The Community

The place has a certain claim to fame because of two local young men who liked to search the foreshore for items from yesteryear, and in 1937 and 1940, discovered what turned out to be the remains of two very old boats.

The war intervened and they had to wait until 1946 to see the boats recovered from the estuarial mud and preserved in the National Museum at Greenwich. One of the brothers subsequently discovered a third boat in 1963 and this is now in the Hull Museum.

Modern carbon dating techniques have established that the oak planked boats were built around 1500 B.C. the early middle Bronze Age and may be the oldest anywhere outside Egypt. Shifting cur-rents in the River Humber made possible this discovery as well as influencing Ferriby as a settlement over the centuries.

Little is known of early history until pre Roman times when the river crossing between North Ferriby and South Ferriby was well established. However, the arrival of the Romans who chose Brough for their settlement, suggested that the water channels no longer favoured Ferriby, and the place declined.

With the Anglo Saxon period after 400 A.D. came villages with names ending in 'ton' (tun or homestead) Melton, Welton, etc. North Ferriby was to become re-established on the present site with another favourable change in the river and the coming of the Vikings, who had taken York in 865. The Danes called the village Ferriby - the place by the ferry. By the end of the century, they had integrated and adopted the native Christianity of the Saxons and built a wooden church.

William the Conqueror displaced the Old English nobility in 1089 and took retribution on the North for their resistance. The church at Ferriby was burned down - not for the first time - and the population devastated. The famous Doomsday Book was commissioned by William before his final return to Normandy, and completed in 1087. It detailed all his acquired assets so he could render taxes, but inspection showed these to have become extensively devalued since the time of Edward the Confessor.

Stability and prosperity, however, returned to the area quicker than elsewhere, probably due to the fertile soils. Edward 1st founded Kingston upon Hull in 1293, and interestingly Scale Lane, Silver Street and Whitefriargate became a dividing line between the Parishes of Hessle and Ferriby, the latter having the northern end of the town.

The Church and Clergy

By about 1200, the wool trade with the continent had made the area important and a sizable stone church had been built. Its Rectors were sponsored by the de Vescy family, principal land owners around Ferriby. When one of them founded the Ferriby Priory, this took over the responsibility of appointing a Vicar from 1315 until the Dissolution of 1540. The Priory belonged to a rare order, namely, Order of the Temple of Our Lord of Jerusalem, under the rule of St Augustine.

The mediaeval church exhibited a few Norman features in its entrance porch and elsewhere. The low squat tower at the West end had battlements with the remains of pinnacles at the corners. It contained at least one bell, the present no. 5, cast by Johannes de Stafford in 1371 maybe while visiting Beverley Minster. However, the church which survived until 1846 appeared to have been made smaller by the removal of the South aisle. A probable reason for this was the acquisition of St Mary's Lowgate, built around 1333, which took away the necessity for a large church and the need to bring town based parishioners all the way from Hull for births, marriages and funerals. They were to become separate parishes as late as 1868.

Amongst noteworthy Rectors was Richard de Vescy (1272), who was not only illegitimate but had a son, despite supposedly being celibate. The Archbishop William Wickwane was not amused, but offered to ignore these difficulties if Robert would move to the parish of Escrick, a post he refused.

Then followed what seemed like a siege of the church, with Robert barricaded inside with his accomplices, in a saga that would last for nearly two years. The Archbishop sought help from many sources including King Edward 1st, to bring about an eviction and sentencing him and his collaborators in the meantime to be excommunicated by the church. Ironically, Robert ended up at Escrick after all.

During a span of years from 1654 to 1766, Ferriby had no resident incumbent at all, Vicars of Kirk Ella holding Ferriby as a Curacy during most of this time, until Joseph Milner became resident Curate and then Vicar in 1786. Appointed by William Wilberforce, he was also headmaster of Hull Grammar School for thirty years and became converted to Methodism, which made him unpopular for a while. However he became influential in religious matters and respected too, being appointed subsequently as Vicar of Holy Trinity.

It was William Wilberforce's son Robert who was to cause a furore in Ferriby in 1864, by declaring the church unsafe and in need of immediate rebuilding. John Loughborough Pearson, from Durham, a noteworthy architect was commissioned to design the new church, following his early work with other local churches. His last project was Truro Cathedral.

The church was completed in 1848 in the Geometrical Style of the 13th century, in sandstone, although some of the limestone from the previous church can been seen in the six pillars and the arches of the north aisle. It is 108 feet long, and the octagonal tower rises to 165 feet.

The Bells

There were probably four bells initially, three from the old church, the number being augmented to five in 1864 and six for Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897.The two trebles were hung on a higher level. They are rung from a room above the organ loft which also contains the clock mechanism, which was added in 1897, access being via a spiral stone staircase from the choir vestry. Until recently the close proximity to the belfry made the bells extremely noisy, but a suspended ceiling fitted in 1993 has alleviated this problem. Outside the quality of the sound is relatively pleasing.

The current local team formed under the direction of Mrs. Chris-tine Pickering has a number of youngsters, but lacks experienced adults. Nevertheless, with much appreciated outside help on Wednesday practice nights, most of them can Plain Hunt or ring Doubles.

All Saints, North Ferriby Six bells, Tenor 8cwt in G.

Treble 3cwt E Mears & Stainbank Founders London 1897 Queen Victoria 1837-1897

2nd 4.3.1 D O Lord in thee have I trusted and have not been confounded Mears, Founders, London 1848

3rd 5.3.26.1 C G. Mears & Co., Founders, London 1864

4th 6cwt B Ihesus Be Our Spede 1601 RC, TL.

5th 7cwt A IHE - Ave Maria Gracia Plena DNS Tetum (Refers to Dominus Tecum) Cast by Johannes de Stafford from Leicester circa 1371

Tenor 8.1.17 G Gloria in Svpremis Deo 1726 Chr. Watson, Peter Burrill, Churchwardens Cast by Samuel Smith of York

Christopher C Brown

Acknowledgements North Ferriby A Villagers' History The Rev'd D.J. Bulman North Ferriby A Guide to All Saints' Parish Church The Rev'd D.J. Bulman

Photograph C.C. Brown