Patrington, St. Patricks.

St Patricks Church is a fourteenth century building situated in Patrington village, in the rural area of Holderness, and is known as 'the "Queen of Holderness".

One of the most striking features of the Church is noticed on your drive into the village; as the spire, renowned to be one of the finest in the country and perfectly proportioned to the rest of the building, towers prominently above the rest of the Church which is one of the masterpieces of English architecture.

The spire stands 180 feet from its base at ground level in the centre of the church, or crossing, where the support is by four massive stone piers providing a construction that allows you to marvel at the skill of the engineers of the 14th century being able to create a steeple of such height and magnificence.

The tower is of three storeys, two of which rise above the apex of the roof. Of the lower of these storeys each side is pierced with a narrow window. Round the upper storey, which is the bell chamber, runs an arcade of four arches on each side, of which two are pierced with square headed windows. The buttresses of the tower die in at the wall at about half the height of the upper storey finished with a plain parapet, furnished with gargoyles. From the tower rises an octagon of stone work supported by flying buttress-es finished at the top with a parapet and sixteen crocketted pinnacles from which the elegant octagonal spire rises.

Going up from the pillars and in the roof of the Church the tower ascends housing the ringing chamber, clock and bells before emerging out onto a walk way around the Corona, from which scenes of the surrounding countryside can be surveyed. The ringing chamber has a central position within the tower structure but has a novel entrance, which as far as is known is unique to Patrington and demands much of the bell ringers. The way-in therefore is by climbing a spiral staircase in a turret at the corner of the North Transept before walking up the roof to enter a door situated near the ridge of the roof. Upon passing through the door the bell ringer has to bend double and crawl along a narrow cat-walk just below the apex of the North Transept roof. This is no way for anyone with a nervous disposition.

Once in the ringing chamber ropes hang for the ringing of eight bells and ringers assemble to practice on Thursday evenings and the ropes are also pulled for ringing on Sunday mornings to inform the village of the service.

The ringing chamber is also the home for the clock mechanism which needs to be wound by hand twice a week. There has been a clock in this Church since 1846, although the present workings date back to 1893. The clock is unusual in that it only shows three faces, omitting a face on the South side of the tower.

Ascending a second spiral staircase leading to the belfry another floor is passed where the intricate gearing is found to operate the clock hands. At the top of the stairs a short ladder is climbed onto a plank type platform which is sat on the bell frame. This can be very unnerving for anyone with an aversion to heights. Here in the belfry is a peal of eight bells. Inscriptions on them show that three were cast in the late 17th century and were recast in 1906. The oldest is a pre-Reformation bell inscribed "In well and wo laud es Deo". The last two bells to be installed were added to the peal in 1948. One is inscribed to commemorate the fallen and the other as a thank offering for victory and preservation.

The bells are of medium weight to ring as listed below:

Bell Weight

Treble (not available)

2nd (not available)

3rd 4.2.20

4th 5.2.4

5th 6.2.27

6th 7.2.6

7th 10.0.2

Tenor 10.0.24

Teams of ringers have rung out from Patrington for a long time, possibly since 1900, comprising adults and youngsters each passing their bell knowledge from generation to generation. Patrington tower with its beauty and spectacular features previously mentioned gives ringers from far and wide a memorable experience not to be missed.

Alan Tiplady