

NOTES RE TURVEY CHURCH BEFORE THE RESTORATION 1852-4

The following notes were started by a curiosity about the position of the old chancel. This led to an examination of the old paintings and drawings near the Font. The CRO photographed these pictures and their descriptions of them provided a degree of interpretation. The situation prior to the extension in 1852-4 would appear to have been as follows:-

The old Choir or Rood screen was on the line of the pillar forming the 3rd arch from the west end of the nave, this was destroyed in 1804/5. The old Chancel then stretched to the East End of the church, level with the Memorial Chapel.

The unfinished sketch by John W Burgon in 1834 shows the steps leading to the Altar and the old position of the Font. Also shown are three of the Mordaunt Tombs and to the left the remains of the Rood Loft. The coloured painting (8501) is a similar view but looking west. Another painting (8499) shows the Choir stalls, the High Altar and the East Window.

One of the most interesting pictures is the faint black and white drawing of the West End of the Church in 1841. It is difficult to decipher this drawing which is from inside the old Chancel, as one can see the Chancel Arch, moved during the alterations and the Pulpit and Sounding Board and various Pews. The interesting point is the gallery and what appears to be an organ about the width of the Nave and the depth of the first arch. There were originally musicians in the Church, there is a reference in the Churchwardens' accounts in 1834-5 for a Bass Bow and String 6s-9d. It seems likely that they originally used the Rood Loft (see Harvey p 203.) As this finally collapsed a new Gallery was built at the West End, possibly to house the organ.

Again in Harvey (p 206) it mentions that the Church was re-pewed in 1846 and in the same year a larger organ was erected in the Western Gallery, Elliot & Hill Builders. In confirmation there is an interesting article from the Northampton Mercury in 1847 about Turvey Church. It mentions a very large organ with its Gallery for performers (causing we feel a regular wheeling round of the congregation when they begin.) This may have been a factor in the subsequent extension of the Church, and the rehousing of the organ.

The report on Turvey Church shows up well against one for Stagsden Church. Turvey Churchyard was locked, possibly a precaution against Grave robbers?