

## A GUIDE TO ST. PETER'S CHURCH, LOWICK, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Lowick has one of the finest churches in England, rated by Simon Jenkins in his *Thousand Best Churches* amongst the top 100 in the country.

### BASIC DEVELOPMENT

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|-------------|--|
| 1086        | A church is known to have existed but no remains now visible   |
| c.1300      | Large scale rebuilding with foundations and several features remaining   |
| c.1370-99   | Rebuilding of the N aisle by Sir Henry Greene (roof with heraldic bosses)  |
| c.1406-15   | Chancel & N chapel rebuilt by Ralph Greene and the rector John Heton (memorials)   |
| c.1470      | S chapel created as a chantry chapel for Sir Henry Greene (d.1467), and then probably refounded as a chantry for Edward 2 <sup>nd</sup> Earl of Wiltshire (d.1499) (monuments) |
| c.1450 – 80 | Nave and tower completed   |
| 1869-73     | Restoration by <i>William Slater &amp; Richard Carpenter</i> (woodwork, roofs etc)   |

### INTERIOR

**N. AISLE** The windows, although 15<sup>th</sup> century, contain **glass** saved from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century church. It was given to the church c.1310-20 by Sir Simon de Drayton and forms part of a large Tree of Jesse window, which originally would have been in one of the East windows of the earlier church. Beginning at the W end, the **1<sup>st</sup> window** has – Rehoboam (son of Solomon), David (son of Jesse, with his harp), Asa (son of Abia, 3<sup>rd</sup> king of Judah); **2<sup>nd</sup> window** - Jacob (father of Joseph), Isaiah, Elijah and Habakkuk (prophets); **3<sup>rd</sup> window** – Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Isaac (son of Abraham); **4<sup>th</sup> window** – Joseph (father of Jesus), Zachariah (father of John the Baptist), Micah (prophet), and a donor figure of a knight (Simon de Drayton). At the top of each window are more figures of early 14<sup>th</sup> century date from other windows. The glass was restored and cleaned by the Barley Studios in 1999 with a grant from English Heritage. At the end of the aisle is an arched **tomb recess**, slightly encroached upon when the N chapel was rebuilt.

**N CHAPEL** Curious **carved head** SW corner, another remnant from the early church. **Crocketed recess** SE corner, being one arch from the chancel sedilia (see later). Magnificent tomb under the arch for **Ralph Greene (d.1417) and his wife Katharine**. This is important as the contract for it exists stating that the carvers were *Thomas Prentys & Robert Sutton* of Chellaston, Derbyshire. Chellaston was the centre of alabaster carving at that time. The contract, drawn up in 1419, shows that the tomb originally had a canopy, of which the cut-off supports still remain. Ralph is shown in full armour covered by a heraldic surcoat, but most unusually he has removed his gauntlet to hold his wife's hand across the tomb, a pose which occurs on only a handful of tombs in the country. Katharine is shown in a long mantle with an especially elaborate headdress. Note the Perpendicular style tracery on the canopy above their heads, still with fragments of colour, and the angels on the sides of the tomb.

Against the N wall is the monument of **Sir John Germaine (d.1718)**. He is also shown in armour, reclining somewhat uncomfortably above the small figures of three of his children by his second wife Lady Betty. The carver is thought to be *William Woodman*, who was employed by Germaine for marble work at Drayton. Under the E window is the monument of his first wife **Lady Mary Mordaunt (d.1705)**, a daughter of Henry 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Peterborough. She had a disastrous first marriage to Henry 7<sup>th</sup> Duke of Norfolk, which due to her

affair with Germaine, ended in a scandalous divorce case. She is shown in elegant dress, leaning on a cushion with a skull, the emblem of mortality. At each end of the tomb are relief carvings with further mortality emblems. This monument is also considered to be the work of the *Woodman* studio. In the corner of the chapel is an unusual **architectural memorial** with just a series of initials. These can be interpreted as commemorating William, son of the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Peterborough, who died in 1625 only 82 days old. It is made of a fossil stone known locally as Drayton marble. Alongside within the 14<sup>th</sup> century former sedilia arch is a brass plate for **Lady Elizabeth (Betty) Germain (d.1769)**.

**CHANCEL.** Of the 14<sup>th</sup> century the **blocked doorway** (N side) and the two in situ arches of the **sedilia**. The **reredos** is a memorial for S.G. Stopford Sackville (d.1926) to a design by *William Blacking* with painted decoration by *Christopher Webb*. The **choir stalls** date from the 1869-73 restoration with fine carved work by *James Forsyth*.

**S CHAPEL.** Divided from the aisle by a **stone screen** in 15<sup>th</sup> century style of c.1850 by *Thompson* of Peterborough. The low tomb with brasses is for **Sir Henry Greene (d.1467)**. He and his wife are shown in heraldic attire. On the S side is the fine monument of **Edward 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Wiltshire (d.1499)**, thought to be the work of the Nottingham school of alabaster carving. By the terms of his will the chantry chapel was refounded, and under the soles of his feet are carved two tiny clerics with rosaries, denoting the chantry. Beautifully carved inscription and again remnants of colour. The other large memorial is for **Charles Sackville, 5<sup>th</sup> and last Duke of Dorset (d.1843)**. His father, Lord George Sackville, was cousin of Lady Betty Germain and had inherited Drayton on her death. Lord George was a Sackville of Knole, Kent, and Charles was the last direct surviving male Sackville, hence he inherited the Dorset title from Knole. After his death Knole reverted to the Sackville Wests and Drayton to the Stopford Sackvilles. The sculptor of the tomb was *Richard Westmacott Junior*. The two **hatchments** are for the 5<sup>th</sup> Duke (over his tomb) and for William Bruce Stopford Sackville.

**S AISLE.** **Poppyhead pews** of early 16<sup>th</sup> century date with various carved details.

**NAVE.** **Pews & pulpit** 1869-73. Over the chancel arch a fine painted **Royal Arms** of George I dated 1718. The **font** is 14<sup>th</sup> century with an elegant fluted stem. Note the **embroidered kneelers** completed by the *Church Sewing Group* during the last few years. The heraldic series were completed as a Millenium project. Memorial by the S doorway to **Robert l'Anson (d.1909)**, who was butler at Drayton for many years.

**STAINED GLASS.** In the spandrels of the **two chancel S windows** shields of 15<sup>th</sup> century date. Good Victorian and Edwardian glass. The **N chapel N window** has heraldic glass by *Lavers & Barraud*, the shields based on records of glass which is known to have been in the 15<sup>th</sup> century church. The **two chancel E windows** are by *Clayton & Bell*; the **chancel S windows** are by *Heaton, Butler & Bayne*. The **S aisle S window** is by *J. Powell & Sons*, and the **S aisle W window** by *A.K. Nicholson*. The **tower window** has glass by *Ward & Nixon*.

**BELLS.** Clock and chimes installed 1891. There are **six bells**: Treble (*J. Taylor* of Loughborough), 2<sup>nd</sup> (*Hugh Watts II* of Leicester, 1615-43); 3<sup>rd</sup> (also by *Watts*); 4<sup>th</sup> (recast by *Taylor* 1884); 5<sup>th</sup> (inscribed "Richard Wood made me", that is from the *Newcombe* foundry at Leicester c.1540); 6<sup>th</sup> (again by *Watts* 1619).

**EXTERIOR.** The **tracery of the windows** should be admired, especially that of the S chapel, and of course, the lantern **tower** with its immaculate Weldon stone masonry (c.1470-80). Against the wall of the S aisle and chapel is part of a 15<sup>th</sup> century **coffin lid**. The churchyard has many fine carved **headstones** especially those alongside the path. At the e end of the churchyard is an enclosure with Stopford Sackville graves.