

SOCIETY FOR LINCOLNSHIRE  
HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

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REVESBY ABBEY, EAST FRONT.

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Horsington Church

The spire of Horsington church has been declared unsafe and £12,000 has to be raised by a small community to repair it. So impressed was the late Sir John Betjeman that he commissioned John Piper to illustrate his poem "A Lincolnshire Church" with a drawing of it.

All Saints was designed by David Brandon in 1858-60 and Pevsner did not like it - he wrote "The whole is thoroughly unsympathetic to its surroundings, and the interior is cold and unsympathetic altogether". Brandon also designed the Rectory and School at Horsington. (and Stubton Rectory, 1857).

The Lincoln Diocesan Architectural Society, our predecessor, in its annual report for 1860, was somewhat more enthusiastic than Pevsner, saying "Until lately, something more like a barn than anything else represented this church; but, chiefly owing to the exertions of the incumbent, Mr Smith, a comely new fabric has now replaced its miserable predecessor. This consists of a nave, south aisle, chancel and tower placed at the east end of the aisle in consequence of the character of the site. The whole is built

of red brick and ark mortar, relieved by freestone dressings, including even the spire surmounting the tower. The outline of this feature is very good, and the effect more pleasing than might have been anticipated from the monotone of its colouring throughout; green slating, however, would have contrasted better with the brickwork than that of the ordinary colour employed. Within, the eastern triplet has rather a bald appearance, and the lights of the western one are rather too far apart, while the little window above it is awkwardly cut by the roof timbers; nevertheless, on the whole this church is very creditable to its architect, Mr D Brandon".

The patrons of Horsington, Magdalen College, Oxford, owned much of the land there and were also lords of the manor. The church was built in 1860, the rectory in 1857 and the school in 1861.

There is a description of the previous church as it was in 1847 - "A thatched building of wooden framework, lathed and plastered, with cottage windows. The thatch is to be mended shortly. The church of this parish stood in the burial ground at some distance from the village, and this building is evidently the Rectorial Tithe Barn, fitted up for Divine Worship at a distant period. A cylindrical font lined with lead with a font bason and cover. The room ceiled and the floors of wood. New deal open seats, desk and pulpit, with new crimson furniture compleat. Communion cloth very respectable, good Bible and Prayer Book, Preface to it in which is the service for the touching for the King's Evil. Good suplice and one for funerals. Silver chalice pewter flagon with cover and plate 1802. Good linen. The inhabitants bury in the old ch. yard. Table good, but no rails. Comm(andmen)ts and Table of Degrees at ye East end. The bell good. Rev. M H Matthews, Rector (non-compos at present) John F Wray, Curate". (Bonney's Church Notes being Notes on the Churches in the Archdeaconry of Lincoln 1845-48, by the Venerable H K Bonney, Ed.Rev.N S Harding Lincoln 1937).

[A drawing of this church was reproduced on the front cover of Newsletter No.55 January 1988]

J Conway Walter, in Records of Woodhall Spa and Neighbourhood (Horncastle n.d.) said of the old church that 'one entered by a descent of two steps, with something of the feeling of descending into a dripping well'.

He went on to say of the new church "The present edifice is neat, but of no great architectural merit, and is already, in parts, becoming delapidated, the stonework of the spire being much weatherworn".

Arthur Thistlewood, the leader of the Cato Street Conspiracy, was a native of Horsington, being the illegitimate son of a woman called Burnett and a local farmer called Thistlewood. He was hanged on 1 May 1820.

Another native of Horsington was William Dennis, whose detailed 'biography' can be found in "Lincolnshire at the opening of the 20th century".

He was born at Horsington in 1841, the son of William Dennis, and "from an early age until his twenty fifth year was occupied in the various departments of agricultural life; in 1866 removed to Kirton, and undertook the agency of a large London house engaged in the potato trade; on their retirement from business, after twenty years in their service, started on his own account

as a farmer and trader; appreciated the possibilities of the rich soil of the district; made potatoe growing a specialty; opened a business at King's Cross Market" - and so it goes on, the story of a farm labourer who by 1900 was living in Kirton House and presiding over a vast business concern.

The ancient church of Horsington, All Hallows, was on a site south west of the present village, at a point almost equi-distant from Stixwould, Burknall and Horsington.

Conway Walter noted that the bell at Horsington bore the date 1754 with the founders name "Dan Hedderly" (see elsewhere in this Newsletter).

Donations to the Horsington Church Restoration Fund may be sent to Mr C Hill, 5 Tower View, Horsington, Lincs. LN3 5EY [T.R.L.]