



## Codford St. Peter's Church

### RE-OPENING OF THE CHURCH OF CODFORD ST. PETER

On Thursday last the Lord Bishop of Salisbury re-opened the Church of Codford St. Peter, which had just undergone a thorough restoration. The Church original consisted of a nave, chancel, and tower at the west end. It has been most satisfactorily restored, and a north aisle has been added, which is connected with the nave by an arcade supported by three closeted piers, which are well executed. The old chancel arch, which was small and ugly, has been replaced by a pointed arch of fine proportions, supported by Devonshire marble shafts, on carved corbels. The ceiling of the chancel is of wood, in panel, with carvings at the intersections of the mouldings. The chancel has been rebuilt, in the decorated style, the old proportions being carefully preserved. On the south wall are inserted three ancient stalls or recesses, which belonged to the old chancel. They are of early Gothic design, and during the intervals of service in the Roman Catholic times were the seats of the officiating priest, deacon and sub-deacon. The communion table, which is of oak, and was presented by the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, is approached by three stages, each of which is paved with Mawe's encaustic tiles. The altar rails are of oak, and are moveable, a somewhat new feature in church restoration. The pulpit, which was presented by Mr Chapman, to the memory of Miss Ravenhill, is of massive oak, polished, and of superior workmanship. The Gothic carving is well executed, and the centre panel has the monogram "I.H.S." The nave and north aisle are in the perpendicular style, the former having an open stained high-pitched roof, the principals being supported by richly carved freestone corbels. A very ugly wooden gallery, which was formerly placed at the west end of the church, has been removed, and the tower arch, which was concealed, has been thrown open, and its fine proportions brought to view. There are several stained glass windows in the church, which are very effective and well designed. The south porch has been rebuilt, a portion of the original materials having been worked in, and the old battlements and gargoyles have been preserved. The interior is richly groined, and the stone carving is finely executed. On the west wall is the following incised characters:- "This porch was rebuilt by Maria Waldron, in affectionate remembrance of her beloved friend, Sophia Harriett Ravenhill, who departed this life suddenly, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1863. "her record is on high.' Job xvi. 19." The seats, which are open benches, are of stained deal, and a new vestry has been added to the north side of the chancel. The church is warmed with an apparatus for heating, supplied by Haden, of Trowbridge. The designs for the restoration of the edifice were furnished by T. H. Wyatt, esq., the diocesan architect, and the work has been well executed by Mr Barnden, of Warminster, the contractor. We have not space to notice all the contributors, but it is only fair to mention some of the principal donors to the fund for enlarging and restoring the edifice. Among these are :- The Rector, the Rev. H. Wightwick, £200; Mr Ravenhill and family, £300; the Rev. A. Fane, and other trustees of the Whiting estate, £100; Mr J. Swayne, £100; the Salisbury Diocesan Church Building Society, £60; Mr Jas. Raxworthy, £50; collected by Mrs John R. Ravenhill, £33 11s. 6d. The deficiency being still between £300 and £400, further subscriptions are earnestly solicited, and will be thankfully received at the Banks at Warminster, by the Treasurer to the Fund for restoring and enlarging the church.

The re-opening service was held on Thursday last, when the Lord Bishop of the Diocese preached two sermons, morning and afternoon. By half-past eleven o'clock the church was filled in every part by the parishioners and visitors, and many persons were unable to find seats. The Bishop and the clergy, who numbered about fifty, met at the school-room, where they robed, and having formed in procession, they entered the church by the south porch. As soon as his lordship appeared in the building, the choir began to sing the 84<sup>th</sup> Psalm, which was executed with good effect. The chancel was reserved for the use of the surpliced clergy. Morning Prayers were read by the Rev. H. Wightwick, the rector of Codford St. Peter, and the Lessons of the day were read by the Rev. J. W. Hammond. The Lord Bishop took the Communion Service; the Gospel being read by the Rev. Precentor Lear, who attended as his lordship's chaplain. The Sermon was preached by the Lord Bishop from Matthew ix. 1-8, being the miracle of healing the man sick of the palsy; and was listened to with the greatest attention.

A collection was then made during the reading of the Offertory Sentences, the amount realized being a fraction over £76. The Holy Communion was afterwards administered.

At the conclusion of the service, the visitors proceeded to a cart-shed a short distance from the church, belong to Mr James Raxworthy. Here provision was made for 300 guests, and the building was converted into a capital dining-room. The decorations were exceedingly good, consisting of evergreens, and a beautiful collection of flags and banners, which we understand were kindly lent for the occasion by Major Ravenhill. On the tables, also, were pots of cut flowers. The provisions were provided by the principal residents in Codford, and we do not hesitate to state that a nicer luncheon was never prepared, or put on the table with great taste. The arrangements were so well ordered, that the large number of visitors was accommodated without the slightest confusion. - For some days several ladies and gentlemen of the parish were busily engaged in making the necessary preparations, and their efforts were rewarded with that success which characterized the meeting on Thursday. The whole of the guests having been seated, the Lord Bishop took the chair, Lady Herbert, and Lord and Lady Heytesbury being present.

In proposing the first toast, his Lordship said although there was a great deal of sameness about it, yet he was sure it was one which they would drink with the greatest cordiality. When they met together, as on that occasion, to rejoice over a good work which had been performed for the benefit of the rich as well as the poor, he trusted for the glory of God, their hearts naturally turned to those who had been most instrumental in accomplishing that work. Generally speaking, it was the clergy and the laity of the parish to whom they were indebted for the completion of those good works. He believed such to have been remarkably the case in that parish. Mr Wightwick, he was sure, would never have performed the work unless he had been supported by the laity, and the laity could not have carried it out themselves unless Mr Wightwick had worked with them. This was the best course to pursue, and He (his Lordship) wished the parishioners of Codford success in the work done. He should, therefore, propose the united healths of Mr Wightwick, the churchwardens, and Mr Ravenhill (*applause*). When in Dorsetshire last week, upon a similar occasion, where a nice little church had been built, he found pretty much the same state of feeling there as at Codford. People generally, were very reluctant to commence a work, and although it was much required, they did not seem anxious to have it done, but when it was completed they were exceedingly glad and thankful. And such was the case in that parish. He very much indeed respected persons for clinging to old associations (*hear*). To illustrate this he would quote an instance. When he was a young man in Oxford, his predecessor was engaged in restoring the church. The people of the parish had given him a good deal of assistance both in money and time. When the work was completed, these were the first people whom the clergyman and himself called upon. They were received with the blackest looks possible. "Yesterday," they said, "was the most unhappy day we have ever spent." Not understanding what they meant, they were asked the reason of its being so, and they replied, "When we saw the old pew gone, in which ourselves and our forefathers have worshipped, we could not bear it; we are very glad however, that the work is done, and if you give us a little time no people will have higher hearts than we shall have" (*hear, hear*). That was the feelings of persons who, from associations, were unwilling to part with things in the old church, they would not regret it hereafter, and he was sure that those present would heartily rejoice that Mr Wightwick, the churchwardens, Mr Ravenhill, and the parishioners generally had been prompted to carry out that good work. He should drink Mr Wightwick's health very cordially, and he trusted that that might be a blessed day for his parish. There was now more in the Church to help people to remember whose children they were, and whose blessing they came to seek (*applause*).

The Rev. H. Wightwick and Mr Ravenhill respectfully returned thanks, and one or two other toasts followed.

The evening service was read by the Rev. H. Wightwick, and the lessons by the Rev. J. W. Hammond. The choral part of the service was very creditably performed. The Lord Bishop, as announced, again preached the sermon from Prov. Xxii.2 – “The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.” A collection was made at the church doors at the close of the service, which amounted to £10. This was considered a very gratifying amount, seeing that it was mainly contributed by the poor of the parish. The amount realised at the two services was thus a little over £86.

The parishioners and the school children, numbering about 300, then proceeded to the luncheon shed, where an excellent spread awaited them. The old English fare of beef and plum-pudding, with beer, was supplied to the adults, whilst the children were regaled with tea and cake.

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