



Parish Church

News

Dilton

Church with three decker pulpit: where Service is held only once a year

Old Dilton Church near Westbury is undergoing extensive renovations. The edifice which stands close to the railway line from Westbury to Warminster is a considerable distance from the nearest village, the old hamlet of Dilton having practically disappeared.

In consequence regular services have not been held there for a considerable period, with the exception of a harvest festival in September. This creates considerable interest in the neighbouring towns of Westbury and Warminster. Except for the occasional visitations the old Church has been neglected, and was in danger of becoming unsafe. Rats had taken up abode there, and cobwebs and dust accumulated.

Owing to the interest taken by the Ancient Monuments Society a sum of money given to them, as well as a small bequest left to the Church is being utilised to strengthen and put in good order the fabric. The work is being carried out by a Devizes firm of builders. The east wall which was practically unsafe has been underpinned, and incidentally a NUMBER OF SKELETONS HAVE BEEN UNEARTHED.

The balcony near to where the altar once stood has been overhauled and new stairs added. Large old beams have been put in the roof, and the windows will receive attention. The work will be limited according to the money in hand.

The interior gives one a good impression of what Established Churches must have looked like a century ago. The old oak "box" pews remain and remind one that they were once appropriated by a family, who adorned and carved them according to their tastes and pockets and so no two are alike.

Another feature in the structure which is seldom seen today is a three decker pulpit, which is in very good condition. The windows have traces of stained glass, which is for the most part missing. It is suggested that Cromwell and his men might have been responsible for much of the sacrilege.

The vicar the Rev R C Turner said there was no intention to have services more frequently as the congregation would have to be drawn from elsewhere.

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