

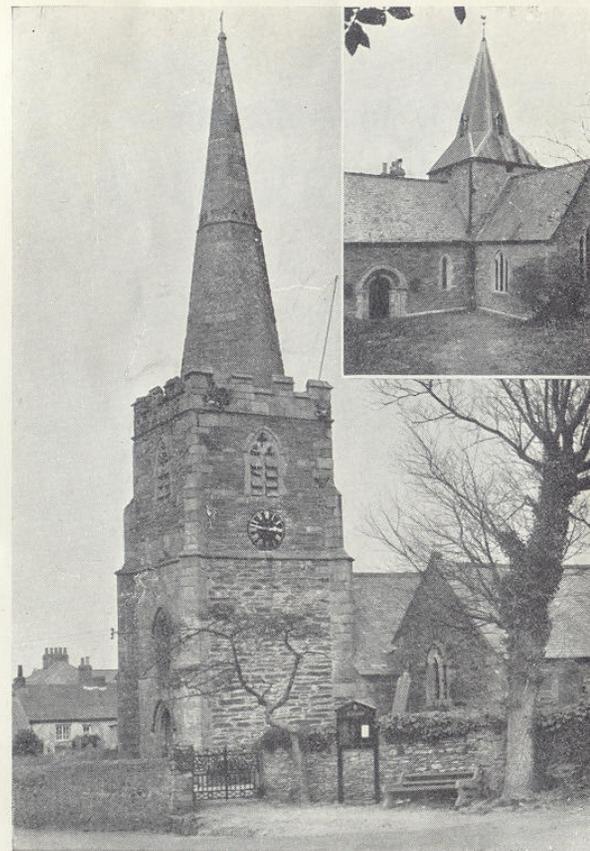
Photo by Griffith Sandy, Truro.

The Norman Door
S. Anthony-in-Roseland

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The Story of
S. GERRANS
with
S. Anthony-in-Roseland
CORNWALL

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PRICE
ONE SHILLING

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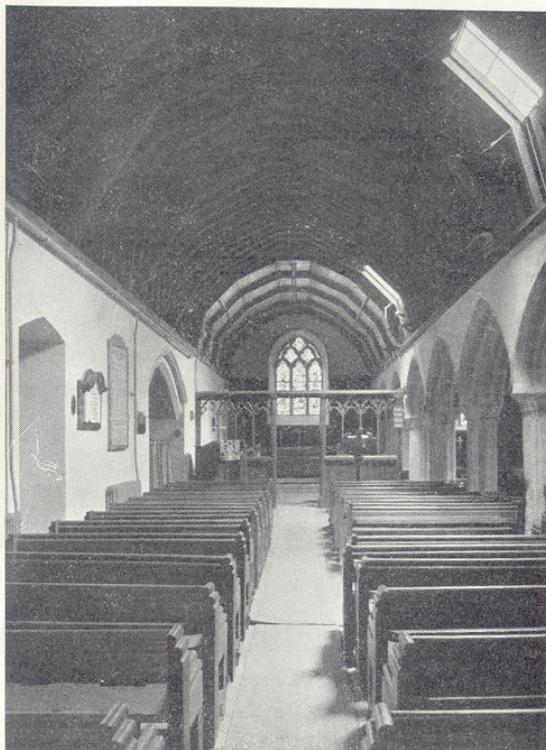


Photo by Griffith Sandy, Truro.

Interior S. Gerrans

FOREWORD

SO MANY PEOPLE, particularly visitors, have expressed a wish to know something of the history of our churches that this souvenir booklet has been produced by the Parochial Church Council to meet the demand.

The authors desire to express their appreciation of the ready co-operation they have received from the Dean and Chapter of Truro Cathedral and to acknowledge their indebtedness to the works of reference listed below.

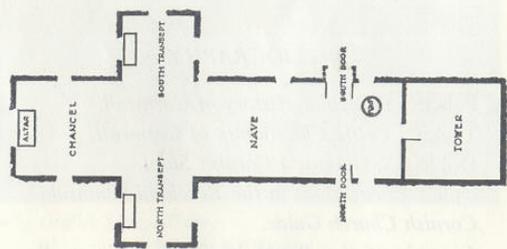
Gerrans
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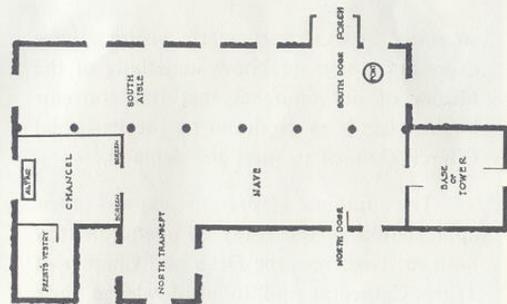
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13TH CENTURY.



15TH CENTURY.



Reconstruction from Original to Present Plan

See page 6

THE ANCIENT CHURCH

THE PARISH CHURCH of Gerrans is the dominating feature of the local landscape, standing as it does on the brow of a hill, overlooking the English Channel. Its steeple is an outstanding mark for the wayfarer by land, and the navigator by sea. Its story is older than a casual glance at the building would suggest. Although the present structure was erected in the thirteenth century, it is known that there has been a place of worship here since Norman times, and it is believed that there were even earlier Celtic and Saxon foundations.

The church takes its name from S. Gerent, Blarens, or Gerendus, a king of Cornwall, who was afterwards canonised.

From the churchyard, looking to the north-east through a gap in the pine trees, can be seen the distant green ridge of Nare Head. A conspicuous feature of this is Carne Beacon, a tumulus, or burial mound of some ancient chieftain. Local legend has it that the body of the saintly King Gerrans was rowed across the bay from his fortress of Dingerein, meaning Gerrans Castle (nowadays Curgurrel), in a silver boat with golden oars and was buried there. Excavations, however, have revealed only a stone burial chamber of the Bronze Age ("Kistvaen") containing blackened bones. How much truth there may be in the stories of this legendary figure we cannot know. It is certain only that there was a Gerrans, perhaps chief, certainly saint, whose name was known in the Celtic world from Wales to Brittany, and whose memory is perpetuated in the name of this parish.

In olden times, Gerrans was the seat of a Bishopric of the Celtic Church. Evidence of this is given by the copy of a letter still preserved at Canterbury, written by Kenstec, Bishop Elect of the Cornish people, whose monastery is said to have been in Gerrans parish. In this letter he proclaims his obedience to the Church of Canterbury and declares his allegiance to Ceolnuth, who was Archbishop of Canterbury from A.D. 833 to 870.

This was an isolated part of the world, but in its time it had some notable visitors. Tregear Manor, which

lay a mile north of the church, was in olden times the capital of an important Episcopal Fief and was often visited by the Bishops of Exeter. Among these was Bishop Walter Bronescombe, who spent several days here in the autumn of 1259. During that time he went to S. Anthony, where he dedicated the monastery church. Later, in 1261, he instituted Bartholomew de Ladario as first Rector of this parish, and at the same time founded a classical school at S. Michael Penkivell, then part of the Manor of Tregear. Among other noteworthy works of Bishop Walter was the founding of Glasney College at Penryn. It was probably due to the activity of Bishop Bronescombe that the first great reconstruction of this church took place in the thirteenth century.

Before Bishop Bronescombe instituted the first Rector, it would appear that the church was a chapel of the monastery at S. Anthony-in-Roseland (see page 13).

THE EDIFICE

It seems likely that the Anglo-Norman church here was of cruciform shape built of undressed stone and poor mortar. Many of these early churches fell down due to their poor construction, but Gerrans church was strengthened and reconstructed. Part of the north wall of the nave, transept and chancel, however, still rest on Norman foundations. Late in the fifteenth century the building was further repaired and extended. The south transept was removed and incorporated in the south aisle. At the same time, following requests from local fishermen, a steeple was erected above the Norman tower to serve as a navigation mark.

For more than the next two hundred years the fabric was neglected and its state of dilapidation became deplorable. One must be thankful, therefore, that so much of the original structure has been preserved. In 1848 part of the roof was destroyed by fire. When repairs were made in 1850, considerable additions to the fabric were made under the supervision of Mr. White, an architect of Truro and student of ecclesiology.

THE MODERN CHURCH

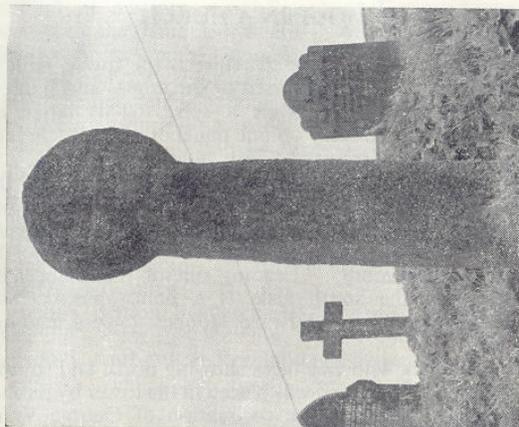
A conspicuous feature of the structure is the tower, which is in three stages. It is buttressed at the angles and battlemented, and is surmounted by a spire. This latter is banded with Gothic tracery on one panel of which is carved the date when it was repaired—25th June, 1636.

The building contains chancel, nave, south aisle, north transept and vestry. The chancel is separated from the other parts of the church by a relatively modern screen of oak; in the south wall is a "piscina" and in the north wall a square "aumbry". Leading out of the chancel is the vestry. In the south aisle is a handsome marble monument in memory of Edward Hobbes, once a leading landowner.

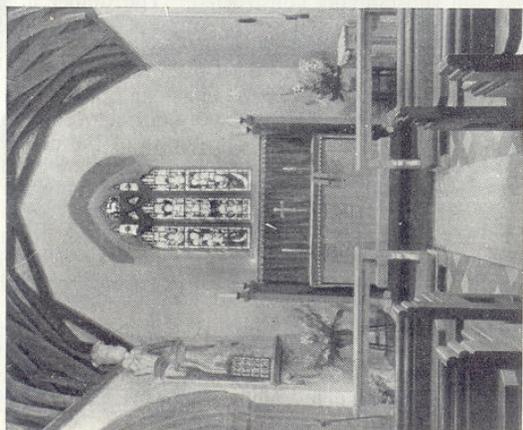
There is a clock with two faces showing north and south, which strikes the hours and was placed in the tower by public subscription to celebrate the coronation of George V in 1911.

The arcade has seven four-centred granite arches, supported on monolith pillars of the same material. The roofs are of open woodwork; the pulpit and seats are well designed and substantially constructed. The timber used throughout is American oak. The transept is separated from the nave by a low chamfered segmental arch. A well-preserved priest's tomb was removed from the chancel and deposited in an arched recess in the north wall of the transept. (This recess now contains the organ, removed from the south transept in 1948.) The windows of the church are of good ornamental glass. The font has a square bowl, the sides of which are ornamented with debased sculpture; it rests on a round shaft and is supported by four small pillars. The font cover is of traditional Cornish form. When the rood screen was made for the church in 1851 the clergy stalls were returned to face east in accordance with the ancient rule of the church.

In the south porch are the remains of a stoup. There is a north door and a vestry, or priest's door, which is now blocked. In the tower there is a light ring of four bells, the tenor of which weighs about 4½ cwt. They



Ancient Celtic Cross, S. Gerrans
See page 9



S. Gerrans—Lady Chapel
See page 11

were cast in 1880. The clock hammer, used for striking the hours, is on the tenor bell. The tower arch is plain and open to the church.

The church is heated by a recently installed low-pressure hot-water system supplemented by electric radiators.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Before entering the church, visitors will notice outside the south door, the Celtic Cross.

This tall, granite, wheeled-cross, which dates back to some time between the sixth and tenth centuries, had on both faces of its head a plain cross; after many centuries of exposure these are now very indistinct. The total height of the monument is nearly seven feet and the curve of the shaft is noticeable.

For generations it formed a coping stone of the churchyard wall and was called by the local children "The Great Custace". This is a reference to the "custace", a circular-shaped piece of wood with a handle formerly used in Cornish schools for administering corporal punishment.

When the church was restored, in the nineteenth century, the cross was set up in its present position.

South Porch

The south porch has, on one side, a list of the Rectors of the parish from 1260 to the present day (see page 16).

On the opposite side is a cusp-headed holy water basin. The porch contains parts of the fifteenth-century carved wall plates from the old roofs. Two more examples of these are in the vestry.

As the visitor enters the church, a step down will be noticed. This provides additional height inside the church whilst keeping the structure comparatively low, so guarding the building against damage from the elements.

The main features inside the church are:

The Norman Font (described on page 7).

Between the open tower and the small north door are two lancet windows typical of Cornish thirteenth-century



Photo by Griffith Sandy, Truro.

The Font, S. Gerrans

See page 7



Bench Ends

See page 11

work. The east window of the transept is of a similar character. Its framework is almost entirely original fifteenth-century masonry.

The chancel walls were constructed in the thirteenth century. In the south wall is the piscina (the drain down which the consecrated water was emptied after Holy Communion service). It is notable that the opening of this piscina is five feet four inches above the nave floor, additional proof that, at that time, the floor was at least a foot higher than it is now.

Lady Chapel

The Lady Chapel commemorates the existence in the fifteenth century of a chapel at Rosteague dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin.

The altar in the chapel is a memorial to a young soldier who was killed in the 1914-18 war. The money for constructing the chapel was raised by the parishioners between the years 1949 and 1951, and it was consecrated by the Lord Bishop of Truro (Dr. Morgan) on 15th June, 1952.

Bench Ends

It was not until the fifteenth century that it became the normal practice to provide wooden seats for worshippers. Before this, people stood during service or, if old or infirm, were allowed a low stone bench. Two examples of such seats, now covered by wooden planking, may be seen round the font against the transept walls.

Of the early pews in this church, six bench ends, dating from the sixteenth century, are preserved. They are amongst the finest examples in the county. They are characteristically Cornish in design with a carved border framing a traceried head over two panels. Below are shields carved with symbols of the Passion—scourges, reed, spears, whipping post, crown of thorns, and Judas's price of betrayal—this is very rarely depicted in similar designs.

On one shield appears the device of Catherine of Aragon (1509—36) which is presumptive evidence that the carvings were executed at that period.



Interior of S. Anthony-in-Roseland
(Decorated for Harvest Festival)

Chalice

It has been stated that the vessel at St. Gerrans is one of the best examples of Elizabethan chalices. It has a height of eight-and-a-half inches whilst the cover is two-and-three-quarter inches high. The date is 1576.

Parish Registers

The parish registers are amongst the most detailed and best-preserved in the country. They are probably the second oldest in Cornwall and go back to the Reformation. There are many notes about persons and events in the parish during the last four hundred years, such as:

"He was drowned from a rock in Polscatho throwing a line to sea."

"Charles the Second came home."

"1663. Ralph Chimoe was drowned by the sudden sinking of a sand barge coming to Porthcule, was taken up at Millennen" (near St. Anthony lighthouse).

S. ANTHONY-IN-ROSELAND

This lovely little church stands on the border of St. Anthony's Pool, overlooking a navigable creek which separates it from St. Mawes. According to Hals, the historian, the church was founded in 1124 by William Warlewast, Bishop of Exeter, and dedicated to St. Anthony who was an Egyptian monk of the third century. At the same time Warlewast erected a priory, or cell, of two black canons, or Augustinian monks. This probably stood on the site of the present mansion of Place which adjoins the church. Place (or Plase), in Cornish "a palace", is known to have been the dwelling of the Prior and his two black canons. It would appear that the church was re-dedicated in 1259 by Walter Bronescombe, Bishop of Exeter (see page 6), the Priory of Plympton being the patron. This priory of Plympton was then one of the most important monasteries in the south of England. S. Anthony Priory was called S. Mary de Vall (nowadays Fal) to distinguish it from S. Mary de Plym, in Devon.

Both priories were named after the rivers on which they were situated. In 1273, Peter of S. Anthony-in-Roseland became Prior of Plympton.

The Priory of S. Anthony was burnt down by the French between 1332 and 1338. This is set forth in the petition of John de Engleburn, Prior of Plympton, to John Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter.

The priory was dissolved by Henry VIII and it is believed that some of the stones were used in the construction of St. Mawes Castle. It is also interesting to record that legend says that Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, whose crests appear side by side on the front pew of the church, spent part of their honeymoon at S. Anthony.

THE EARLY CHURCH

The style of architecture of much of the building was Early English. The nave, however, appears to have been of an even earlier date, as is shown by the fine Norman arched doorway, which is still in a good state of preservation to-day.

An archaeologist has reported that outside the church there is a Saxon archway covered over with masonry of a later period. This definitely identifies the church with pre-Norman times. Also part of Place is stated to be an old church built in 933 by Athelstane, first Saxon king of all Britain. And it is further believed that this church was erected on the site of a monk's cell dating back probably to about the year 500.

Originally the shape of the edifice was cruciform, made up of chancel, nave and transepts with a central tower supported on four acutely-pointed arches. This tower disappeared, whether by accident or at the time of the Dissolution by Henry VIII is uncertain.

Leading into the monastery from the nave was a door, which still exists and now gives access by granite steps to the mansion of Place. On the old walls, several frescoes, executed chiefly in black and red, were found.

Before commencing the restoration of the church, a mass of earth, some eight to nine feet deep, had to be

removed from the outside of the walls in order to find the foundation of the old chancel. During the excavation two human skeletons were found, one on each side of the altar, with the feet near the east wall. They were covered with rough stones shaped like two sides of a triangle. There were also two coffin-shaped slate slabs, each marked with a cross, in the old pavement of the church. These were presumed to belong to the two skeletons, which were re-buried in the positions they had originally occupied with the slate coverings over them. The skeletons were supposed to be the remains of Peter of S. Anthony, who spent most of his life here, and died, Prior of Plympton, about 1273; and of David Berceley, who died, also Prior, about 1507.

THE RESTORED CHURCH

In the early part of the last century the church became very dilapidated and Sir Samuel Spry, the patron, decided to restore it. He consulted the Rev. Clement Winstanley Carlyon, Rector of the neighbouring parish of S. Just, an authority on church architecture. It was under his guidance and supervision that the present building was erected.

The chancel stands on the original foundation. The church is provided with many windows all filled with stained glass with borders round the lights and diapered ground work.

The roof is open woodwork, stained with oak varnish, with arched braces having a bold moulding and tooth ornament. On each of the collar beams a scriptural text is painted and gilded.

The seats are open with carved ends upon which are painted the coats of arms of the Spry family.

The pulpit, reading desk and all the seats are of English elm. The communion table, also of English elm, has carved sides and ends. The panels of the altar screen are diapered with blue and white enriched with gilding and vermilion.

The floor is paved with Minton's tiles.

The spire is octagonal on a square base; it has four lights and is constructed of timber and slate. It contains one bell.

In the north transept are found a number of interesting monuments, chiefly dedicated to members of the Spry family.

For many years the living was a perpetual curacy in the gift of the Spry family, but in 1949 it was incorporated with the living of S. Gerrans. The present Lay Rector of S. Anthony, Major N. Grant-Dalton, is directly descended from the Spry family.

Although records of the early history of S. Gerrans and S. Anthony are scanty, enough is known to indicate that they played a great part in the life of the community. It will be remembered that, situated in the extreme south-west of the island, the people of these parts were largely self-contained, and the changes in the more easterly portions of the country took a long time to penetrate to this remote district. It is hoped that enough has been written to show that these two Roseland churches have a long if not eventful story, and that the visitor of to-day will remember in his prayers those people of these parishes who worship, and have worshipped, here, for nearly a thousand years.

RECTORS OF S. GERRANS

Bartholomew de Lardario	1260
Roland	1273
Paganus	1275
John de Hanoke	1280
Sir Richard de Tentoyne	1308
Thomas de Cornubia	1310
Sir Richard de Brayleghe	1311
Sir Henry de Trefeuwa	1312
Sir Henry de Pultone	1324
Sir Adam de Tavistoke	1349
Sir William de Trebusy	1359
Sir Guy Ayschwille	1361
Sir Andrew de Fawy	

Sir John atte Hyl	1370
Stephen Cavel	1371
John Fecos	1411
Sir William Nelme	1460
John Lawry	1515
Sir John Cok	1520
Sir John Tyack	1528
Thomas Andrewe	1536
Sir Richard Depyng	1547
Sir Thomas Gybons	1583
Thomas Yowinge	1591
Henry Godfray	1609
Stephen Garth	1617
John Trestean	1644
John Cole	1645
John Dell	1692
Daniel Southmead	1708
John Bedford	1726
Richard Fouller	1728
John Trenhayle	1730
John Grant	1758
John Wilcocks	1785
James Williams	1807
William Williams	1844
John Jope	1861
William Baker	1876
William David Longlands	1880
Frederick Henry Scrivener	1889
John Bartlett	1902
John Arundell Leakey	1908
Charles Ernest Randle Cowan	1926
Herbert John Martin	1936
Archibald Harry Wood	1937
Thomas Gwynne Davies	1947
Herbert Thomas Wright	1951
Harold Doudney	1961
Hamilton Lloyd	1967
Harold White	
Robert Simpson Macdonald	
Albert Edwards	