

## **ST. DENYS' CHURCH NORTH KILLINGHOLME**



This church could be an Architectural Historian's nightmare; there is so much evidence of past alterations. When approaching the gate numerous repairs and insertions will be observed in the south walls, most obvious is the heightening of the walls. That of the chancel passes around the east end and extends up into a gable as at **East Halton**. This was added in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The porch is plain, composed of brick resting upon ashlar. In the south wall of the chancel note the priests' door with a round-headed, Norman appearance. The aisle windows are of the 14<sup>th</sup> century with a 'reticulated' window (c.1325-50) in the west wall of the north aisle, which had been greatly distorted by subsidence, this damage has recently been restored (Summer 2000). At the east end of the chancel are two Early English lancet windows, and on the south side two Decorated windows, one heavily restored with intersecting Y tracery. There is an interesting Mass Dial built into the corner at the west end of the south aisle. At each end of the north aisle are corbels with a face and shield bearing Arms.

Enter the church and you will find the interior full of light from large clerestory windows of uncertain date, modern furniture, and a floor completely carpeted. Refurnishing was done in 1981 as a thanksgiving by the 'Church Mice' (a pop group led by the then vicar, Rev. R. Kenyon), a fact recorded on a tablet on the south side of the chancel arch. On the opposite side of the arch a similar tablet dedicated by the bishop of Grimsby at the same time, records the names of those 19<sup>th</sup> - century parishioners who emigrated the United States and founded the town of Low Moor in the State of Iowa. The chancel arch is 19<sup>th</sup> century, though it appears to be of the same date as the nave arcade, dated as Perpendicular (say c. 1375). Traces of medieval paint can still be seen on several of the pillars. In medieval times the interior will have glowed with colour.

To the west of the chancel arc the doorways to the rood-loft, now occupied by amplifiers. The screen across the chancel arch still stood in 1846 when it was described as Perpendicular. The Crucifix now suspended from the arch was made in Oberammergau, in Germany, where the miracle plays are performed every ten years.

At the east end of the north aisle is a hagioscope, perhaps better known as a 'squint'. There may have been an altar at this point, because squints were frequently used to allow a priest celebrating Mass at a side altar to consecrate the host at the same time as the priest celebrating at the high altar. The view through the squint looks directly onto the altar in the chancel. But another sign of the presence of an altar is missing, namely a piscina. To the east of the north door is a holy water stoup. (Do not confuse it with the missing piscina, since a stoup has no drain to it). Both the stoup and the squint are set rather low down demonstrating an alteration to the floor level at some time. Over in the south aisle, set into the wall above the windows, are the remains of Medieval grave-slabs. Sixteen portions have been recorded. On the eastern face of the tower, above the arch, may be seen the roofline of an earlier nave, and what of the tower arch itself? Pevsner describes it as 'bafflingly sumptuous'. It is a Norman arch of three orders and roll mouldings with scalloped capitals to the pillasters. Surely this is the original chancel arch, removed at some time and re-erected here. Above the west window of the tower there appears to be a roundel, heavily covered in lime-wash, possibly bearing an image of the Virgin and Child.

When leaving the church, pause as you exit the porch and look to your right. Between the sundial in the churchyard and the southwest corner bearing the mass-dial, is a headstone with the word, 'Here' inscribed in large letters at the top of the stone. Closer inspection will reveal the following inscription:

*Here lieth interred the Body of John the son of Robert and Rebecca Easton,  
Who died the 15 day of July 1809 aged 1 year.  
Go home Dear Parents and do not mourn,  
I must lie here till Christ return,  
And do not think that I am dead,  
I am only undress'd and gone to Bed.*