

From the Archives

THE CORBELS IN THE CHANCEL

There are eight small stone corbels set into the top of the walls of the chancel in Holy Trinity, four on the north wall and four on the south wall and best viewed with binoculars. John Dean, however, kindly took photographs of the corbels for me as I thought you might like to have a closer look at them. They are below the present roof line and are thought to have supported wall-posts for an earlier four-bay roof and probably date from the 13th century.

NORTH SIDE



← CHANCEL ARCH

EAST WINDOW →



SOUTH SIDE

The stone mason who carved these lively caricatures perhaps found inspiration from some of his friends and family in the village. Nowadays it is quite usual to see weathered gargoyles and corbels replaced by contemporary heads. The Queen and Prince Philip, both crowned, grace the west door of Chichester Cathedral and on the external wall of the south aisle of the Cathedral two weathered gargoyles have been replaced by 20th century carvings of eminent local people. If you walk round the outside of the Cathedral on the south path to the cloisters you will see them; one is a learned gentleman in a wig, holding a scroll, with his mouth wide open to accommodate a drainpipe!

Joan Langhorne

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THE CORBELS IN THE CHANCEL—PART 2

The eight small stone corbels set into the top of the walls of the chancel were featured in last month's magazine (*Bosham Life*, January 2019, page 6). They can be seen below the present roof line so must have been placed there to support wall-posts for an earlier roof of the chancel. At some time in the Middle Ages, the roofs of the nave and the chancel fell into disrepair and, because it would have been a cheaper option, they were replaced with roofs of a much lower pitch. The two views below show the church with the low pitch roofs in 1845 and how it is today. The capping stones of the original roof line can be seen on the tower wall with a window opening beneath. On the next page you can see the changes made to the eastern wall and the chancel roof.



The church in 1845: John Coney

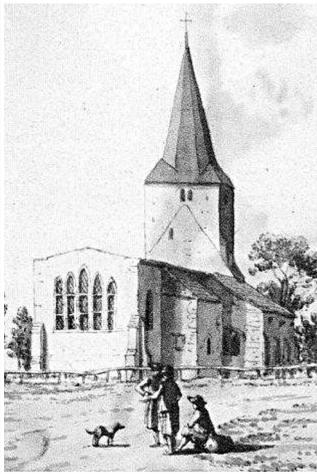


The church as it is today

In 1704 Queen Anne herself created 'Queen Anne's Bounty'; that is the short title of the Act—the long title is: 'An Act for making more effectual her Majesties gracious Intention for augmenting the Maintenance of the Poor Clergy'. This Act restored to the Church an increase in the incomes of the poorer clergy, a fund raised from the tithes which Henry VIII had taken for his own use.

In 1863 the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who had been formed to assist in the administration of Queen Anne's Bounty in 1836, and who were also authorized to determine the distribution of other revenues of the Church of England, offered to make a complete restoration of the chancel of Bosham church and to raise the roof to its original height, provided the roof of the nave was also raised to its original height at the same time. On receiving this offer the vicar, the Reverend Henry Mitchell wrote to his parishioners, 'I need scarcely say how desirous we are to accept this magnificent offer but am compelled to add that in a work involving so great an outlay, without extraneous assistance it will be utterly impossible for us to do so'. Fortunately, the necessary 'extraneous assistance' was forthcoming, the offer very gratefully accepted, and the two roofs were restored to their present height in 1865; although the small corbel heads became redundant, they were left in the walls.

The Tithes of a Parish, which in this case included the chancel of Bosham church, were the legal property of the person who held the office of Rector, and not the Vicar—who could not be an office-holder but was an employee, remunerated by a stipend. The Cheesman family were the last Rectors of Bosham and as well as being



The eastern wall and chancel roof in 1824 (J Rouse) and today

entitled to the Tithes they were also liable for a percentage of any repairs required for the upkeep of the chancel. It is for this reason that the Cheesman family are remembered in three plaques in the floor of the chancel—Caroline (died 1858), Leonora (died 1878) and Alfred (died 1886). Alfred was the husband of Caroline and father of Leonora. He was Chamberlain and Coroner of The Manor of Bosham.

When the glass in the first two windows on the north and south side of the chancel were replaced in 1979, the inscriptions, which were on the windows, were carved into the windowsills. Caroline is remembered on the south window and Charles Cheesman, who was the father of Alfred and died in 1849, is remembered on the north window. The Cheesman family lived for many years at Rectory Farm.

In 1948 the Church Commissioners were set up to manage the historic property assets of the Church of England, combining the assets of Queen Anne's Bounty and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. So, thanks to Queen Anne's Bounty, the Church Commissioners still have a liability of over 80% for any chancel repairs that are needed in Bosham Church!

Joan Langhorne