

Welcome  
to  
St Symphorian's Church



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When you have finished using this guide could you please return it to the area by the door so it is ready for use by another visitor.

If you would like a copy of the guide it can be downloaded from our web site at [www.theseasideparish.org](http://www.theseasideparish.org) or you may wish to take this copy with you then please donate £1.00 to cover the cost of printing. All donations should be placed in the churn by the door. [Thank you.](#)

## A brief history

Although there is evidence of the old Norman church it is possible that the site has been used for worship for far longer than this. The Celtic cross which is on the left of the path as you walked up to the church gives some evidence of this and there is archaeological evidence of very early settlements on what is now called Forrabury common or The Stitches.

The first written document relating to the church is dated 1189 when the church was given to Hartland Abbey. Very little of this original church now remains but evidence of it can be seen in the south wall of the nave, with the round Norman arch of the south transept and also the font. All that remains from medieval times are a number of pew ends (the pews having been removed and destroyed in the 1800's). These now form part of the altar, pulpit and credence table.



The porch, which is thought to date back to about 1520 is roofed with huge granite slabs. The tower was rebuilt on its original base around 1750-60. There is a single bell in the tower dated 1812. Folk law has it that there was originally to be a ring of 6 bells but as they were being transported by boat from London to Boscastle they were lost when the ship sank at the harbour entrance. Some people say that they can still be heard ringing on a stormy night from the ocean bed!!!



The 1800's saw extensive restoration and rebuilding. In 1842 the roof had to have extensive repairs after a gale (known as 'The Jessie Logan Gale' caused extensive damage to the village). The repairs to the roof cost £46.2s.11d—the cost of about 12 slates today!! In the 1860's the south side of the church together with the porch was taken down and rebuilt. At the same time the church was enlarged by extending the north transept to form the present north aisle. A vestry was added to the



Chancel prior 1911

existing south transept and all this work was completed at a cost of £320. The chancel flooring, panelling, altar rail, screen, and reredos were put in around 1911. The reredos was moved to its present position at the rear of the north aisle in 2004.

Since the tower was rebuilt in the 1700's only routine maintenance work had been carried out on it. By the millennium it was in need of restoration as there was large scale water penetration whenever there was rain. In 2004 a restoration programme was put in place where by the tower was completely repointed, the bell chamber floor made safe with new RSJ's and the roof reformed. This project cost around £50,000 with the entire cost being raised by the local community. A significant proportion of the money need was raised by the then controversial 'builders calendar'!!!

## The Church

**The font** — This is normally found just inside the door of a church as baptism, for which the font is used, signifies the start of a life following the teachings of Christ. All fonts will have a hole in their base so as to allow water that has been consecrated for the act of baptism to be let out to the earth after the service. This particular font is thought to date back to Norman times and is also of interest because of the strange change of design on one side from the other.



**The pulpit**— It is from here that the priest, deacon, reader or other persons given permission to preach by either bishop or priest-in-charge will preach the sermon reflecting upon how God is still active in our lives today. The sides of the pulpit in Forrabury church are made up of the

carved medieval pew ends which were removed from the church in the 1800's.

As you move from the nave of the church (the part where the pews are) into the chancel (the part where the clergy and choir sit) you pass through the screen. Although our screen is relatively modern (1900's), medieval churches had screens in this position to separate the clergy from the congregation. The services at that time would have been said in Latin and the majority of people would not understand what was being said and so were left to their own devices (to talk etc). When an important part of the service was reached a bell would be rung to attract the congregations attention. It could be that this also is the reason that the pulpit is always outside the chancel as this is where the word of God is proclaimed to the people, so it needed to be in the nave where the people would be. The two angels attached to the screen are 'Shaker' angels made in America and given to the church by the actress Dawn French during the filming of 'A Seaside Parish' when she came to visit the parish at Christmas in 2004.



**The altar**— near the east wall of the chancel was rebuilt in 2008 with the medieval pew ends which formed the front panel being retained. There are five carved panel showing the letters 'A' and 'S' in the form of a serpent; a dove ; a shield with a lance rest; a lamb and flag over the letter

M (which is thought to be the monogram for Mary); a Cross with a crown of thorns, hammer and pincers, spear, sponge, heart and nails, all of



which are emblems of Christ's crucifixion and on the far right panel there is a geometrical design.



Set into the wall to the right hand side of the altar there is a small brass door with a light over it. This is called an **Aumbry** and it is here that consecrated bread (wafers) and wine are kept. When the bread and wine are there the light is lit and when empty the light is turned off.

Immediately under the door to the aumbry there is a small table once again made of the old medieval pew ends. The carvings on these ends which can be distinguished include a heart transfixed by a spear, a cockerel and a hen. This table is called a **Credence table** and it is on this that items such as bread, wine and water are placed before being used in a communion service.



Coming out of the chancel back into the nave of the church on the right hand side we have the **Lectern**. In Forrabury this is in the shape of a carved eagle. The eagle is the symbol of St John the Evangelist whose words in the Book of Revelation "soared up into the presence of Christ". In mediaeval times it was believed that the eagle renewed itself by flying into the sun. It is on the lectern that the bible is kept from which bible readings are read during services.



By the side of the organ (which was installed in 1914) we have the **Votive Stand**. This is a table shaped object with candles on it and was given to the church in 2006. Members of the congregation and visitors to our church are invited to light a candle in memory of a loved one or for some event or to help one to reflect upon an issue.



The north transept is at present used as a small side chapel for a quiet mid week service. The table which forms the altar is thought to be Jacobean (early 1600's) while the furnishings including the embroidery of a dove in flight, were made and given to the church by a recent rector and his wife.



Round the walls of the church are a number of memorial tablets and a War memorial dedicated in memory to the men of Boscastle who lost their lives during the first world war.



Also showing the parish's close connection to the sea are two memorials to men who lost their lives at sea. This connection to and dependence upon the sea can again be seen in the churchyard in the wind vane which is in the shape of a fish at the top of one of the pinnacles of the tower. It is said that sailors on the ocean use this to help navigate this dangerous part of the coast. However there is some doubt about this as the church cannot easily be seen from the sea, and the small wind vane would be even more difficult to spot!!



**Into the future**—the care, maintenance and restoration of this building is an ongoing project. In recent times we have put in carpet and a book case. The windows on the south side of the church, as well as the one by the organ and behind the altar have been taken out, the stone work restored, windows leaded and reglazed and then rebuilt. Outside the path up to the church from the road has been resurfaced. In the future we need to complete the work on the windows, look seriously at the roof and would also like to do something about the sound in the church to help those who have hearing problems.

## Something to do!!!

Can you answer the following clues, fill in the grid and find the hidden word. Also you might be able to find all the answers in the word search which is also on the inserted sheet. You are welcome to keep the grid and word search but could you please return the guide booklet to the back of the church as we only have limited numbers of these.

### Clues:

1. The name of the storm in 1842.
2. Where the consecrated bread and wine are kept.
3. In what period was the arch in the south transept built
4. The name of the ship on which James Desborough Kirkness served.
5. The name of the evangelist whose symbol is the eagle.
6. The middle name of Gerald Alford.
7. The actress who gives angels.
8. A 'table' for candles.
9. The period when the side altar table was made.
10. A carving on the altar which holds liquids.

Now look down the grid in the highlighted box and you should find the eleventh word in the word search.

## And finally ...

We hope you have enjoyed your visit to our parish church and thank you for visiting us—we are only sorry that we could not be present to greet you personally.

If you would like to find out more about the parish, our services and other events which take place during the year the Friends of Forrabury Church have a web site at [www.theseasideparish.org](http://www.theseasideparish.org) (More information about the Friends can be found on this site).

If you would like to give a donation towards the upkeep and running of this church and parish there is a churn for donations by the door.

Did you know that you can tell the government how you would like them to spend your tax money on this donation by putting your donation in one of the envelopes and completing the details on the front?

We will **ONLY** use this information to claim back your tax and **WILL NOT** use it to send you junk mail or for any other purpose.

### A prayer

Heavenly Father,  
we thank you for our holidays  
and for all times of rest and recreation.  
Give refreshment to body and spirit  
to all those who are on holiday  
and to all those who visit this place.  
We ask that they might return home safely  
refreshed and with a new strength  
and vision of your love;  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord                      Amen