

This talk is based on four key dates :

1. 664 The Synod of Whitby

This marks the real beginning of the Church of England, which predates the Kingdom of England by centuries. England at this time :

- a) Totally disunited - 7 or 8 kingdoms, South West and North West still Celtic.
 - b) Much of it forest or fen; very small population and communications difficult.
 - c) Christianity not universal and Church divided :
S.E: Roman church established by St. Augustine sent by Pope Gregory the Great; S.W: Roman but not under Canterbury; Celtic Church separate and different from R.C; Scottish Church based on Iona dominant in Northumbria and Midlands.
- .*. Synod of Whitby summoned by King of Northumbria and Roman supremacy accepted by all (St. Peter held the keys!). THIS LINKED US FIRMLY TO THE CONTINENT - could be said to lead eventually to our adherence to the Treaty of Rome and the building of the Channel tunnel!!!

Southwell at this time :

Possibly saw the building of the first church - using tesserae from Roman Villa (paving under the Bread Pews).

2. 956 Eadwig's Charter to Archbishop Oskytel

In the previous 300 years :

- a) In Europe - Holy Roman Empire begun by Charlemagne 800 A.D.
 - b) In England, golden age of early English Church;- many saints;- schools and learning; Alcuin - Bede; church life established.
- but c) In the 9th century Viking invasions destroyed much of this, until 870 Wessex attacked; 871-9 Alfred led fight against Danes and eventually won. Danes accepted Christianity, Alfred accepted Danelaw : Watling Street the frontier. 880-950 gradual reconquest of Danelaw : Kings of Wessex became Kings of all England.

955 Eadwig succeeded as King, aged about 18. Only ruled 4 years, followed by his brother Edgar.

The Church at this time

- a) Much destruction by Danes, especially in North and Midlands.
- b) A bad time on the continent too - papacy at rock bottom.
- c) 10th century saw two separate revivals - in Europe through the Cluniac reform, in England through St. Dunstan, supported by Edgar. Both based on monasticism. Eadwig preferred old English system of secular canons and quarrelled with Dunstan. Gave Southwell and its lands to the impoverished Diocese of York and put all Nottinghamshire in that Diocese.

Effect on Southwell - established a system that lasted until 1840s.

A new church was probably built then - fine tradition of 10th and 11th century Anglo-Saxon architecture (little left today). Housed St. Eadburgh's relics (relics had great importance then). Lintel in South Transpect and part of a pillar in S.E. corner of the sanctuary are the only remains.

1050 Archbishop Cynesig gave two bells.

Next Archbishop Ealdred gave refectory for Canons.

N.B. We are often asked "Why such a big church in such a small place?"
Two answers - 1) Anglo-Saxon churches were not necessarily in chief towns - Normans moved several sees, and 2) All towns excluding London were tiny until the 10th century and even after that, smaller than Southwell today.

3. 1171 Pope Alexander III's Bull

This exempted Southwell from Archbishop's jurisdiction - put directly under Pope, i.e. a "peculiar", BUT Archbishops appointed canons, so had some control. Many were non-resident and even foreign. No dean or provost. Sacrist the only officer. Supposed to live in the room over the North Porch - probably occupied by his Vicar, i.e. Deputy.
New Church built 1108 - circa 1150 - part of Normans' changes.
Effects of Norman conquest :

- a) Church reorganised - but Southwell not affected directly.
- b) Great rebuilding and building - churches and castles.

Other changes between 956 and 1171.

- a) Church much more powerful both in Europe, as a result of conflict between the Empire and Papacy; and in England as a result of Becket's murder 1170. N.B. Southwell had its Chapel of St. Thomas, and
- b) by Crusades - 1st Crusade 1095-1099 brought many new ideas and customs from the East.

4. 1300 approx. - the Minster complete

This year is a climax in many ways - the apogee of medieval civilisation - Dante puts his vision of heaven and hell in that year.

The Minster also virtually completed, the pulpits and the great West window the only major changes thereafter (see Norman Summers 'A Prospect of Southwell').
New quire built in the first half of the 13th century, Chapter House at the end.

Developments during the period 1171-1300 :

- a) The triumph of the Papacy: 1215 Innocent III and the Lateran Council; his successors triumphed over Emperor Frederick II, but the Papacy became degraded thereafter by pursuit of political power.
- b) 1215 Magna Carta. Henry III's reign (1216-72) saw war with barons under Simon de Montfort and the beginnings of Parliament, which continued to grow under Edward I (1272-1307).
- c) Great intellectual developments - growth of Universities.
- d) The Friars - St. Francis and a new vision of nature as God's creation.
- e) Growth of population, towns and trade - arts and refinements of civilisation.

Chapter House shows :

- a) The advance of building skills.
- b) The love of nature, the seeing eye.
- c) Its shape : a copy of what they thought Solomon's Temple to be like, and perhaps also a medieval garden in stone.