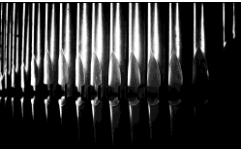


Answers to the Explorer's Guide Questions - St Mary Magdalene Church, Duns Tew

Find the Missing Mouse



	1. The South doorway dates from the late 12 th to early 13 th century. It is probably over 800 years old.
	2. It is a ' <i>Font</i> ' which is used for baptisms, also known as a christening. Water from the Font is poured onto the head, the clergy baptises saying ' <i>I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost</i> ' and a sign of the cross is made on the forehead. Parents/God Parents make promises of faith.
	3. To ring the bells in the church tower. The tower holds 5 bells dating from 1660 to 1858.
	4. The marble tablet is dedicated to the Revd William Gorden, the vicar between 1794 to 1837. He was also the Curate of Steeple Barton, Rural Dean and a magistrate. He was described as a caring and intelligent clergyman who devoted himself ' <i>to the temporal as well as spiritual wants of his parishioners</i> '. Whilst held as a prisoner of war in France for 11 years he helped run the relief for ' <i>distressed English</i> '.
	5. The plate is a Roll of Honour dedicated to villagers and members of the Dashwood family (formerly Lords of the Manor) who died in battle during the 1 st World War 1914-1918 (<i>'the Great War'</i>).
	6. The first priest listed is Osbert and he was at the church before 1231, so probably around 800 years ago. However, records from Oseney Abbey suggest that there was a priest (Edward) at Duns Tew at least as early as 1129. Up until the Revd Jane Wright all those listed were men.
	7. The flag commemorates the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration which brought aid to European areas which had suffered during the 2 nd World War. It was gifted to the church by the late Major General Sir Richard Lewis (of Duns Tew Manor) who was its representative in Europe.
	8. It allows the organ to play many notes, many timbres, and have a large sound range. Some of the large pipes on display may be for show, others may be used to provide sound. Others are hidden. The organ was gifted to the Church by Mrs Emma Hall in 1865, the wife of Mr Alexander Hall (politician, JP, Deputy Lieutenant and High Sheriff of Oxford). It was first played at Easter 1865 by Mrs Hall where her repertoire included Jackson's "Te Deum in F".

	9. It is the remains of a medieval crucifixion scene in stone of Jesus Christ which was erected in 1976 under the medieval canopy north of the Chancel arch. Looking at the legs of the figure red colouration can be seen. Pre- the English Reformation of the mid 16th century many churches were richly decorated with colourful murals, painted screens and patterned ceilings. However, Edward VI ordered churches to remove or destroy religious images and to whitewash wall paintings that showed saints or biblical scenes.
	10. The numbers indicate to the congregation the hymn numbers that are to be sung.
	11. Queen Victoria, the monarch who was on the throne in 1861 when the church was rebuilt. This head and the head opposite were by the sculptor John Birnie Philip.
	12. Bishop Samuel Wilberforce was the son of the English Parliamentarian, William Wilberforce. William introduced bills and organized campaigns that made the slave trade illegal in the British Empire in 1807. He continued to fight for the abolition of slavery itself until his death in 1833. William Wilberforce was a moral and political leader who had a lasting impact on human rights and social reform.
	13. The pulpit is a raised ornate platform where the clergy read sermons, preach and conduct certain parts of the church service. It means that he or she can be heard and see or be seen by the congregation.
	14. The big table is the Altar (sometimes called '<i>The Lord's Table</i>') is the central feature of the church. It is the place where the bread and wine used for communion are consecrated by the clergy - the bread symbolising the body and the wine symbolising the blood of Jesus Christ.
	15. The big ornate wooden screen is known as the '<i>Reredos</i>' which is located behind the Altar and serves as part of its backdrop.
	16. The central figure is Jesus Christ at the and at the foot of the cross are to the left St Mary (the mother of Jesus, representing grief and suffering) and to the right St John (the Apostle, representing faithfulness).
	17. The wooden tablet was made by the company established by Robert Thompson, known as the '<i>Mouseman</i>' as he carved a mouse into his designs (top right). Although Thompson died in 1955, the company continued this tradition.

18. It is not known exactly when a church was established in Duns Tew. The earliest mention is Edward the Priest of Duns Tew in 1129 (see qu. 6). However, circa 1218, the Bishop of Lincoln, Hugh of Wells, instituted an investigation into churches in his Diocese. A few had been consecrated well before this time, the church at Duns Tew (Donostiwa) being one of them. It is described thus *“The revenue for the benefice of the church of Duns Tew which belongs to the prior and canons of Merton, consists of all income from the altar and all the small tithes of that church and in all the land of the church, namely two and a half virgates together with a suitable house. And it is said to be inadequate and it is not known who consecrated the church.”*

19. Sir George Gilbert Scott designed the rebuild of Duns Tew Church in 1861 which was mainly paid for by Sir Henry Dashwood, with contributions from the village. Examples of his work are the Prince Albert Memorial (Kensington Gardens), St Pancras Hotel and Station (London), the Foreign and Commonwealth office (London), Exeter College Chapel (Oxford) and St John's College Chapel (Cambridge).

20. John Hardman & Co was a company of metal workers, artists and stained-glass window makers whose work included metalwork and stained-glass windows for the Houses of Parliament. Augustus Pugin had been one of their original designers. Clayton & Bell was a famous London stained-glass company whose work was included in Westminster Abbey, Gloucester, Salisbury and Chester Cathedrals, and mosaics on the Albert memorial.

21. The Altar is placed at the east end of the church so that the congregation faces east. At the west end of the church is the entrance from the everyday world, the middle part of the church ('Nave') is where the congregation gathered and at the east end is the altar representing holiness, resurrection and light (encapsulated in the 3 large stained-glass windows).

22. Up until the end of the 16th century the religious identity of English churches shifted back and forth between Roman Catholic and Protestant. Initially Duns Tew church would have been Roman Catholic and was known as St Mary's. This is shown in the will of Richard Castelton, vicar of Duns Tew from 1508-32, in which it is written *“...I commit and give my soul to almighty god to Our Blessed Lady Saint Mary and to all the holy company of heaven and my body to be buried in the chancel before our Blessed Lady in the church of Our Blessed Lady of Dunstewe...”*. St Mary is the mother of Jesus Christ. The reason for or the date of the change to St Mary Magdalene is, to date, not known. However, Mary Magdalene was one of Jesus' closest followers who was present at his crucifixion and was the first witness of his resurrection.

A good starting point to discover the history of Duns Tew and its church is from the Victoria County History series of books which can be found online at:

British History Online

<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol11/pp209-222>