## A Short Guide to the Parish Church of St Andrew Wiveliscombe

The present church dates from 1829, the previous church having been taken down because it was thought to be unsafe. The building is the work of the famous West Country architect, Richard Carver, who also built the Town Hall in the Square for the Lord of the Manor in 1841.

Standing under the West Gallery, you will note the box pews. These are original and were put in the church in such vast numbers as to enable all adult parishioners to be seated; many have since been removed. Modern bench seats have been set in the South aisle and all box pews from the North aisle have been removed.

When the box pews were first installed, they extended to where the present High Alter rails stand at the East end; there were no choir stalls then and no Lady Chapel in the South aisle. Where the present choir vestries are in the small South aisle, there were originally seats for children which faced the church. The arrangement of Sanctuary and Choir you now see dates from 1872.

The font is said to be Norman. It was removed from the church in the 1829 rebuild and was used as a garden ornament for many years. It has since been recovered and placed in its rightful position, surmounted by a handsome oak cover of Edwardian construction. A small font was placed under the gallery in 1829 and the mark where it stood can still be seen behind the South Churchwarden’s seat.

In the South aisle between the vestries will be seen the most important relic of the pre-1829 church; the Wyndham Memorial. There are two recumbent figures of earlier parishioners; the stone is alabaster and the chest upon which they rest is full of rubble, the coffins long since gone.

The window over the Lady Chapel alter is worth noting. It is a memorial to a former Vicar and is said to be the best glass in the Church. It is by the firm of Kemp/ Towers and another window by the same firm is in the North West wall.

The choir stalls are modern and were given in memory of the Capper family, as was the pulpit. This however contains panels from the pre-1829 church, possibly from the ancient screen, as are some of the panels behind the alter and in front of the alter itself.

Above the High Alter is a modern rose window with lancet windows on either side, designed and painted by Miss Alice Erskine especially for St Andrew’s. She depicts St. George in the rose window and the lancets show British patron saints.

Note the many allegorical items in the windows: such as the snake and toad at the feet of St Patrick. The rails at both alters are foreign; those at the High Alter are thought to have come from a church in Flanders after the Great War.

Looking westward, the organ gallery can be seen with the Georgian Royal coat of Arms. The 2 manual organ is by Osmonds of Taunton.  Under the gallery is a list of Vicars and a small oak panel bearing the arms of Bishop William Knight [1541-1548].

In the North aisle is a fine cope chest. This is the property of the Bishop of Bath & Wells, loaned to the Churchwardens. It was made for the Bishop in 1902 to contain the cope he wore at the Coronation of Edward VII in Westminster Abbey.

The church plate includes a fine Elizabethan chalice and cover dated 1573. The registers of baptisms, marriages and burials date from 1558 and are kept in the County Records Office at Taunton. In the Tower is a fine ring of 8 bells, the tenor by W & C Pannel of Cullompton, weighing 16cwt 2qtr 18lbs.

Under the church are extensive vaults in which are buried some of the families of those who purchased the right when the church was rebuilt. Outside on the North side of the churchyard is the ancient medieval churchyard cross and the much weathered figure on its West face is thought to be that of a Bishop. Below the churchyard on the South Eastern side, Bishop Drokensford [1309-1329] built himself a manor house of which all that remains is the main gate arch.

The church itself is built of local sandstone. When the building was put up, the outside was rendered. This was not to the liking of the parish so, in 1880, the render was removed to reveal the beautiful red stone, but passing onto future generations the problem of halting the deterioration of the crumbling soft stone.

To see the as-built drawing of the Church, visit [www.churchplansonline.org](http://www.churchplansonline.org/) and follow 'simple search' for link to Wiveliscombe, St Andrew's or directly look at [Church Plans](http://www.churchplansonline.org/image_collections/jpegs/00781.jpg) .

The Church Crypt was used in the Second World War for the storage of valuable and precious Church furniture, ornaments and records from all over the country.

This church is in constant use for the worship of God. Please spare some time during your visit to pray for your needs and for us.

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