**THE CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST**

Like most churches, while the original stone church was Anglo Saxon, many alterations were done over the years, and then it was heavily ‘restored’ by the Victorians. In the case of St John’s this restoration took the form of demolishing the north transept of the Anglo Saxon church, along with the medieval north aisle and extending the nave by 28 feet (9 m). A new, higher, roof was added, leaving the line of the previous roof visible at the east end of the nave, and a new north aisle was built. However, much of the original Romanesque structure was retained, particularly the chancel and part of the south transept.

The basic building displays many typical Anglo Saxon features, such as the tower being wider than the nave and the wall thickness of the chancel being 2 ft 8in, a typical Anglo-Saxon dimension. The remaining strip work and pilasters on the outer south wall of the chancel are also typical of Anglo Saxon work. Inside the south and north arches from the early church remain; they are Romanesque in style, both jambs and arches show the Anglo-Saxon feature of a half-round soffit roll, and the quarter rolls of the outer orders on all the jambs and on the surviving arches are typical of Anglo-Saxon work. The east and west arches were rebuilt in the 14th century in a pointed form; this would have become necessary due to the additional weight of the tower, originally just one stage, but extended twice before 1450.

The turret stair to the tower and the south doorway were retained. The carved tympanum of the South Doorway, with two Celtic beasts, was uncovered when the medieval south porch was demolished during the Victorian renovations. This is very much in keeping with the Anglo-Saxon tradition, and is in good condition due to being protected by the medieval porch for some five hundred years. Part of the Victorian rebuilding, was the addition of a mortuary in the churchyard which incorporates other early carvings from the original stone church.

A comprehensive account of the history of the church is featured in the booklet A Short History of the Church of St John the Evangelist, Milborne Port, by J. Fanning & Dr. L. Wray,

priced at £3.00 + postage. This is published by the Milborne Port History & Heritage Group and can be obtained by contacting the Secretary.