

Old St Cuthbert's Chancel

Just outside Milborne Port, near Osborne, but officially in the parish of Castleton is the chancel of the original St Cuthbert's Church.



Over a thousand years ago, the Saxon King Edgar gave Osborne to Sherborne Abbey in memory of Alfred the Great's elder brothers, who reigned before him and were buried at Sherborne.

It seems that a chapel of ease, served by monks of the abbey, was built on this site although nothing remains of earlier buildings. In 1862 a new church was erected half a mile to the north and the old St Cuthbert's was destroyed apart from the chancel now preserved, which was built at the behest of John Dunster, sacrist of the abbey in 1533. The 15th century font is well preserved, and the pulpit dated 1639 and communion rails are good examples of early 17th century rustic workmanship. There are examples of 14th and 15th century floor tiles displayed on the west wall, several inscriptions sadly now very eroded.

Inside are memorials:-

'Here lyeth the body of John Shuttleworth Gent descended from the ancient family of Gawthorpe, Lancashire and was buried here the 16th day of November 1686.'

'James Noake 1793 and his wife Sarah who bore him twelve children.'

Details of these and others outside can be found here

<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2443139/memorial-search?firstname=&middlename=&lastname=&cemeteryName=St.+Cuthbert%27s+Old+Church&birthyear=&birthyearfilter=&deathyear=&deathyearfilter=&memorialid=&mcid=&linkedToName=&datefilter=&orderby=r&plot=>

So next time you drive into Sherborne keep an eye out for the chancel which lies between the main A30 road and the railway line. Better still, park in the lane to Osborne and walk back to explore on foot. The church is open every day and a service is held annually on Trinity Sunday, donations are appreciated.

*Valerie Jackson
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