

WINDMILLS in CHURCHES

P. B. Bryan

This study is called "Windmills in Churches" only because I have so far not found any reference to watermills except for an embroidered kneeler in Ramsbury parish church, Wiltshire. As far as I can gather from "Country Life", that has recently been house converted. Before I move on to more details of windmills seen in churches, here are my suggestions on why watermills may not be represented.

1. Not quite as easy to draw as windmills.
2. Do not come to mind so easily, as watermills are often tucked away out of immediate sight.
3. Watermills had been around for so much longer. As windmills were a relatively recent innovation around the time they started to appear in churches they were a good subject, especially for graffiti.
4. Generally, watermills do not have the same appeal (or romance) as windmills.

Other suggestions would be welcomed.

Most of my information comes from a list compiled by Rex Wailes, which in turn came from a survey done by someone else. I am now trying to visit and photograph these examples gradually.

The earliest reference seems to be a boss in Norwich Cathedral, of the "Stupid Miller" joke which appears to have been popular around the 14th century. The miller, seeing that his horse was tiring, lifts the sack of corn and then mounts the horse with it. This first example is dated about 1325. The only brass on the list is in St. Margaret's Church, Kings Lynn - again the stupid miller joke.

Almost all the examples are of post mills, save two. Stoke by Clare in Suffolk has a stained glass window of a very Flemish looking tower mill - the only reference to that type. Shipley in Sussex has a stained glass window of the smock mill, it being a memorial.

Some excellent 17th and 18th century graffiti appear on the outside walls of several churches, mainly in Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. About five post mills of varying sizes appear on Tottenhoe Church, only a stones-throw from Doolittle Mill which we will be visiting tomorrow, so we should make an effort to see them. They are well worth a visit.

The 15th century church screen at Torbryan in Devon depicts St. Victor of Marseilles holding a sword in his right hand and a windmill in his left. He was martyred in AD 403 by being crushed between two millstones.

Categories

Stained Glass	10	Brasses	1
Wood carvings (including bench ends)	1	Graffiti	4
Stone carvings	12	Tombstones	several
Wall paintings (many St Christopher)	9		
Panel paintings	3		
Etchings on silver (base of chalice)	1		

The following pictures were shown:

1. Bench end, Bishops Lydeard, Somerset. 16th Century.
2. Window, Shipley, Sussex. Memorial to Lady Burrell.
3. Stoke-by-Clare, Suffolk. Tower Mill Window. 1470-1480.
4. Post mill graffiti, porch of St Michaels, Longstanton, Cambs. Under care of redundant churches fund. Windmill stood by church at one time, but unable to identify its type.
5. Well dressing, St Michaels, Longstanton. September 1986.
6. Millstone at the bottom of the well.
7. Millstone at the entrance to churchyard, Longstanton.
8. Half a millstone used as a headstone to a miller's tomb, Laycock, Wilts.
9. Graffiti, Gamblingay Church, Cambs.
10. Graffiti, Tottenhoe, Beds.
11. Two roundels in Founders Chapel, King's College, Cambridge.
12. Corpus Christi chapel, Fairford, Glos. Part of a windmill(!)
13. Stained glass watermill in Mayview Guest House, Cambridge. It originally came from a country house on the Fens somewhere. Can anyone identify it?