



Welcome to the Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene, Stoke Canon

The church of Stoke Canon was probably one of the Domesday churches of Devon. Before the Norman conquest there may have been a small rural oratory of cob, thatched with osiers, served by a priest from St Peter's monastery. When the monastery at Exeter was made into Exeter Cathedral the endowment of Stoke manor remained with it and it is recorded in the Domesday book.

In 1148 Stoke was assigned for use of the Canons of the cathedral who had a dwelling house at Stoke and may have served the church sometimes, although they also appointed a vicar or chaplain.

There appear to have been several buildings consisting of a nave and chancel on the site of the present church, with the addition of the tower in the 1400's. A visitation of the Dean and Chapter in 1301 notes that the church was in possession of many vessels, crosses and banners and that the figure of St Mary Magdalene over the high altar was old and ill-shaped.

In 1835 the church, apart from the tower, was rebuilt and enlarged. Between 1874 and 1884 the pews were rearranged, probably to accommodate a choir and an organ which was installed in 1879.

The oldest item is the font, which is Norman in style and one of the oldest in Devon. The tower is not square and is much broader from north to south than east to west. The weather vane is in the form of the early Christian secret sign of a fish and incorporates a crown signifying that it is a salmon – probably because the church stands on a salmon river. 15th century medieval pews with Tudor pew ends can still be seen in the gallery of the church. The pulpit is a good example of Jacobean woodcarving. Two large mural tablets from the 17th century have been retained and the large oil painting in the chancel is a copy of a 17th century Italian or Spanish 'The agony of Christ'.

The church clock dates from 1731, while the boards on the tower wall commemorating the founding of 'Poor Charities' date from 1797. Four bells were installed in the tower between 1641 and 1724 and two more added in 1885 to make a ring of six.

A major reordering of the interior of the church has just been completed. The East end of the church has a new 'in-the-round' pew layout with the altar remaining unchanged and a movable altar being placed in the central open space when required. A gallery has been built at the West end of the church. The area beneath the gallery is a flexible, multi-purpose open space screened from the East end by folding glazed doors.

The gallery is approached by a staircase in the tower and by a fully accessible passenger lift at the West end of the open area. At the front of the gallery there are three rows of tiered seating using the existing Georgian pews. To the rear there are fully accessible toilets, a vestry cum office and an open area.

The Boone Connection

In recent years strong connections have been made between our church and The Boone Society of America. Ancestors of Daniel Boone, the great American pioneer, lived and were buried in Stoke Canon. George Boone II, was buried on 31st May 1696 and his wife Sarah on 5th February 1708. Three of their children, namely Henry, George III and John were baptised in the Church of St. Mary Magdalene.

25 members of the Boone Society visited Stoke Canon in April 2007 whilst on a tour of England. Members also gave generously to the cost of saving the church when the roof was in danger of collapse.



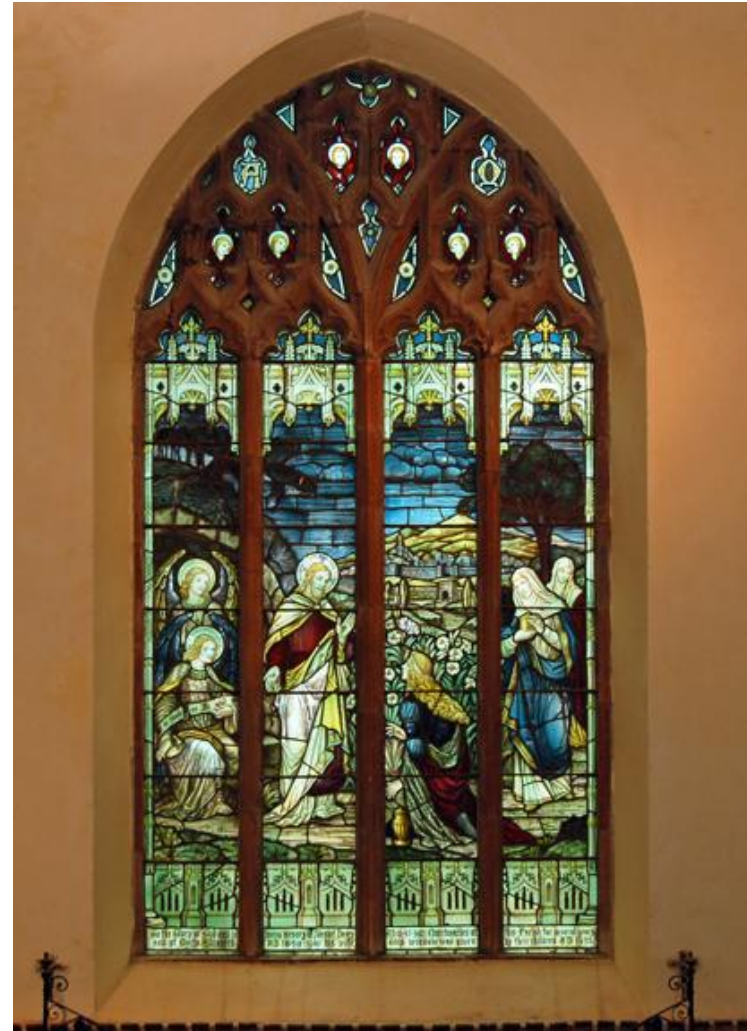
The chancel and east window



The chancel, viewed from the balcony



Above - detail from stained glass in the west window of the tower.



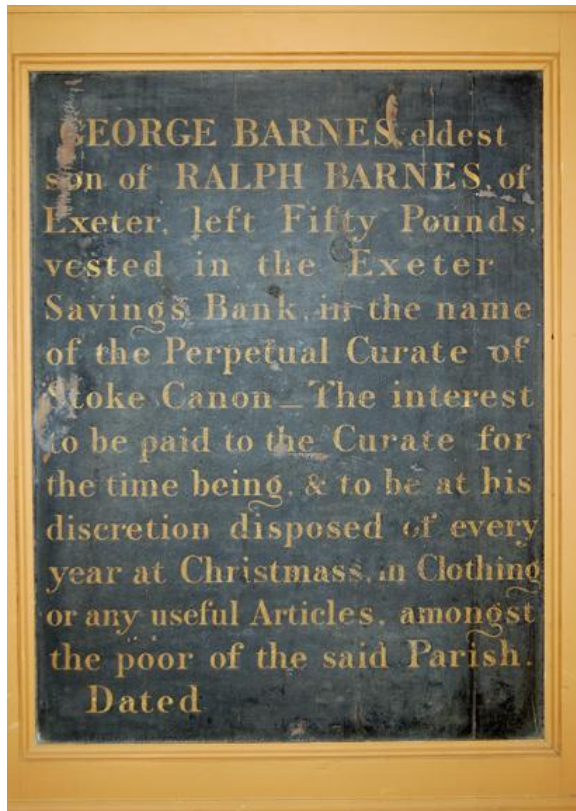
Right - the east window. The inscription reads *“To the Glory of God and in loving memory of Samuel Davey AD1847-1912 churchwarden of this parish for several years and of Maria Elizabeth AD1849-1910 his wife. This window was given by their children AD1925”*.



The font



The 1914-18 memorial



One of the two 'Poor Charities' boards of 1797



The recent reordering of the west end of the church includes a gallery and a multi-purpose open space.