

## The Bridge Community Centre

*A unique community space*

A development of our local church with all the facilities of a **modern community centre.**



### The Main Hall

Suitable for presentations, meetings, training sessions, seminars, demonstrations, adult education classes, coffee mornings, children's activities, health and fitness sessions, organisations and clubs. Seating for 50, tables, screens, audio-visuals and kitchen facilities.



### The Gallery

Accessible by lift or staircase the gallery is suitable for small meetings or conferences and working groups. Space for 20 people, toilet, disabled toilet & baby-changing area.



### The Worship Area

Suitable for traditional and informal worship, retreats and conferences. In-the-round seating, large open central area.

**The entire ground floor and gallery** can be made available by opening the sliding doors between the main hall and the worship area. Suitable for weddings, concerts, plays, music practice and rehearsals. Full access for disabled people.

### Hire of the Centre

There is an hourly hire cost for the centre  
There is a lower rate available for people organising local community activities run on a purely voluntary basis (i.e. any income generated is used only for the benefit of participants)

### Equipment Hire

Charged per session (morning, afternoon or evening)  
This includes a mobile stand-alone plasma screen, full AV/PA equipment plus a charge for an operator.

To view / book please contact:  
Email: [thebridge@netherexe.org](mailto:thebridge@netherexe.org)

## The Village & Parish of Stoke Canon

The earliest known date for an Anglo Saxon Charter was AD670. These records were burned. In AD 937 King Athelston rewrote the charters defining the boundary of the estate of **Hrocastoc** (the old English name for Stoke Canon) bestowing six plough lands bounded on the west by the River Exe.

It is probable that the Church of Stoke Canon was one the Domesday Churches of Devon with a small Oratory of cob long before the Norman Conquest

In c1250, the Manor of Stoke was granted to Robert Pyegne (Pyne) for life.

In 1281, a newer name, **Stoke Canonicorum**, was first recorded when Canons would reside in a dwelling-house locally and serve the church and Exeter Cathedral.

The ancient bridge of the two arms of the River Culm was built in the late 13<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1296 the will of Henry de Berbilond left 12 pence for the bridge. Bishop Stapeldon, in 1326, left £4 in his will for its upkeep.

Stoke Canon remained a manor of the Dean and Chapter until the 19<sup>th</sup> Century apart from the Parliamentary Wars when a garrison was established.

The ancient manor stood on the site of the present Oakhay Barton and was the ancient seat of the Rodd family of Trebarthen Hall, Cornwall. The present Oakhay Barton was built in 1780.

A fire in 1841 destroyed 12 dwellings including the Stoke Canon Inn. In 1847 a bigger fire, started from a passing train, destroyed 32 houses, 30-40 barns outhouses and stables. Poor families sought shelter in the Church for months and also saw the birth of a baby (Bill Dicker).

A thriving railway service (brought to Stoke Canon in 1844) survived until 1963. The signal box (1874) still survives and is a listed building.

The Jubilee Hall was built in 1906 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (1897) for the benefit of the Church and the village.

Located 5 miles north-east of Exeter, Stoke Canon remains a village that has the best that both rural and urban amenities can offer.

### Daniel Boone

The great-grandparents of Daniel Boone, the great American pioneer, lived and were buried in Stoke Canon. George Boone II was buried 31 May 1696, his wife Sarah was buried 5 February 1708. Their three children Henry, George III and John were all baptised in the font in the church. Members of 'The Boone Society of America' have visited Stoke Canon and donated generously to help save the church.

### Netherexe Parishes

Netherexe Parishes is a community of nine churches in the Diocese of Exeter serving Brampford Speke, Cadbury, Newton St Cyres, Rewe with Netherexe, Stoke Canon with Huxham, Thorverton and Upton Pyne. The churches of the Netherexe parishes together form a 'Mission Community', which commits itself to maintaining a worshipping, witnessing community within all our parishes and making the gospel known to people of all ages and backgrounds.

The Netherexe Parishes  
Website: [www.netherexe.org](http://www.netherexe.org)

Produced by  
Brian Please



## Visitors Guide



### St Mary Magdalene Church and Bridge Community Centre Stoke Canon

WELCOME to our Parish Church! We are delighted that you have taken the time to find and visit it. Stoke Canon Church is a Grade I listed building and dedicated to St Mary Magdalene.

The Tower is late 15<sup>th</sup> Century. The church is built using volcanic stone and yellow limestone from Bath. The inside is made from locally quarried stone; white limestone from Beer was used for the window tracery.

The Church has undergone three major transformations in 1836, 1870s and 2008-9, in some cases resurrecting the building from a serious dilapidated state. Be prepared to be astonished at the latest interior transformation with expanded facilities creating a modern, flexible space accommodating the need for worship and putting the building back at the centre of the community.

In 1836, plans drawn up by John Mason of Derby, at a recorded cost of £1k led to the taking down, rebuilding and enlarging the church (275 additional seating to give 415 in total intact, 488 with children) to accommodate the expansion of work at the local paper mills.

In 2008-9, based on generous local donations and grants from the National Lottery Fund, the church was re-ordered to offer an innovative opportunity for people to make use of a peaceful, village-centred space in which to meet.

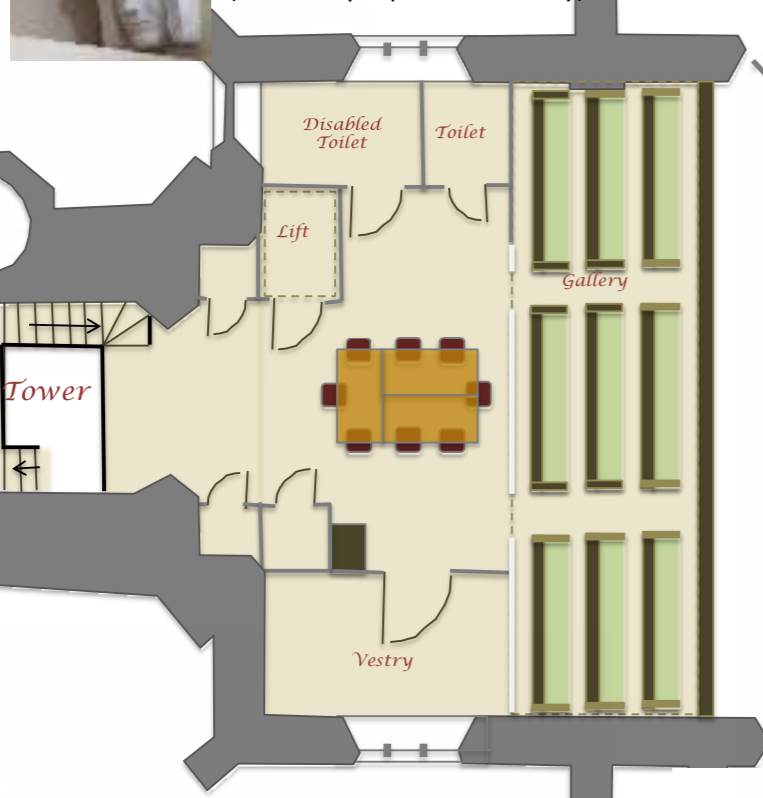
Informal services, Holy Communion, baptisms, marriages and funerals continue to be performed. Burials (apart from internment of ashes) are no longer permitted in the churchyard and a new burial ground was consecrated in 1924. Headstones have been moved to the perimeter to facilitate maintenance.

We hope you enjoy your visit today and ask that you join with the countless people who have passed through our doors by pausing to say a prayer before you leave

*God of heaven and earth  
we thank you for your grace and mercy  
that has shone through the lives of the saints in  
Stoke Canon in many years past.  
We pray that this church may always bear witness to your  
redeeming love, that all who enter these doors may be filled  
with your presence  
and may come to know and love you,  
through Jesus Christ. Amen*

**Royal Arms of William IV**  
Late Georgian, located over the tower arch, dated 1835

**Corbels**  
Supporting the roof structure (these may represent St Mary)



**New Gallery (part of re-ordering in 2008-9)**

- ❖ New stairway, lift, toilets, open plan
- ❖ Additional seating (use of pews and pew ends) on a balcony
- ❖ Storage, Vestry & flexible office space

**The Bells**

- ❖ Tenor – G – 1724 – Evan & William Evans, Chepstow
- ❖ Fifth – A – 2011 – Whitechapel Bellfoundry (new casting)
- ❖ Fourth – B – 1641 – Thomas Pennington II, Exeter
- ❖ Third – C – 1952 – John Taylor, Loughborough
- ❖ Second – D – 2011 – Whitechapel Bellfoundry (recast)
- ❖ Treble – E – 2011 – Whitechapel Bellfoundry (recast)
- ❖ Service Bell – A – 1691 – Christopher Pennington (original fifth, retained as special historic interest)

Fund raising, including a £44k Heritage Lottery Fund grant, led to major work being done 2011-12 for a new ringing chamber and to remodel, re-tune and rehang the peal in a new bell frame.



**The Tower**  
65 ft (c20 metres) high, built in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. The base is broader N-S than E-W (possibly a feature to absorb the vibrations of the bells). The turret staircase spirals clockwise, a defense for soldiers coming down with swords in their right-hand. Sockets surviving in the walls show construction of the tower and for hanging the bells, was by internal scaffolding. Other surviving holes were used for door bars. The original clock, placed in the tower in 1731, is one of the oldest working clocks in the Diocese and is displayed on the main tower staircase. In 2009 a radio-controlled mechanism was installed connecting to the original face. The weathervane on the turret is in the form of a fish, a secret sign made with the toe of a sandal when Christians were persecuted by the Romans, now a Christian symbol. The crown denotes the Culm to be a salmon river.



**Pews**  
The oldest wooden items in the church are a substantial number of 15<sup>th</sup> Century, late medieval pews, bench ends and bench backs. They display a remarkable picture of re-cycling over the centuries and have been retained & redistributed around the Building and in the gallery.



**The Church Interior**  
Looking West and East



**Collegiate Seating**  
The pews below the pulpit and lectern are of historical importance. They include panelling from the old box pews of 1836. These influenced the new collegiate 'in the round' formation.

**Pulpit**  
The semi-octagonal wooden pulpit dates from c1620; Jacobean with arched panels and fluted muntins. There are scorch marks on the pulpit caused by people lighting fires for warmth /



cooking when villagers took refuge in 1847 from a fire that destroyed a large part of the village.



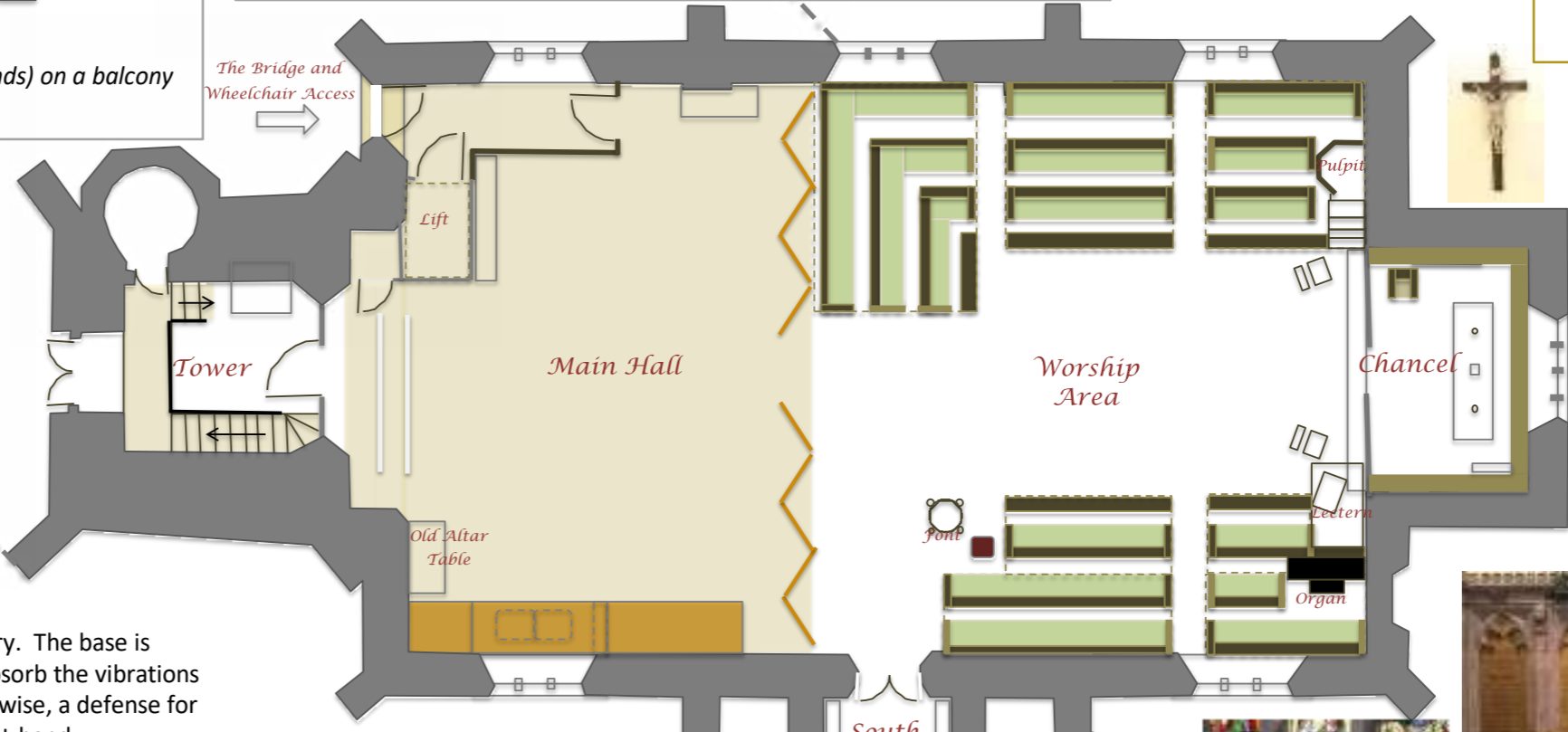
**East Window**

*The story of the Resurrection.*  
It depicts Christ with two angels, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Salome and the jars of anointing spices

**Main Hall & Worship Area (part of re-ordering in 2008-9)**

- ❖ Repairs to the roof
- ❖ South doors replaced with glass doors (more welcoming)
- ❖ Front-seating (by Pulpit / Lectern) to remain, further benches arranged to create a collegiate formation
- ❖ An electronic keyboard (to replace the pipe organ installed in 1878)
- ❖ West half to be cleared (taking out the organ, pews and kitchen), new flooring, lighting and heating, partitioned off by folding, half glazed doors, a new kitchen, storage containers, chairs, all part of a large open plan area

The Bridge and Wheelchair Access



**Chancel Panelling & Painting**  
Made of purple South Devon limestone in 1836. An impressive arcade of pointed, cusped bays divided by buttresses with battlemented cornices. The large oil painting is a copy of a 17<sup>th</sup> Century Italian/Spanish work 'The Agony of Christ' of the Mannerist school. It depicts Christ just after the Elders have placed the Crown of Thorns upon his head and a scarlet robe around his shoulders. Painted by King of Bristol in 1841.



**Old Altar Table**  
Highly significant and valuable as very few survive from this period (c1836). Flat backed as it would have stood with its back against the altar wall. It bears the initials, WJN, for Rev W.J.Napleton.



*Goodness with Contentment is Great Gain*

**Barnes' Window**  
The children are buried beneath the altar



An impression of how the Font may have originally appeared

**The Norman Font**  
The oldest antiquity in our church, one of the oldest fonts in Devon and of national importance. Made of one piece of locally quarried volcanic stone (Thorverton trap) tapering to a square base. Repeated geometrical designs based on a circle, four caryatids holding ropes & standing figures in between. Carved at the corners are animals (presumably lions) heads downward, mouths open ready to devour the human figures. Originally placed near the west door and re-sited during the recent re-ordering.

