

= St Chad 's Church , Poulton @-@ le @-@ Fylde =

St Chad 's Church is an Anglican church in Poulton @-@ le @-@ Fylde , a town on the Fylde coastal plain in Lancashire , England . It is an active parish church in the Diocese of Blackburn and the archdeaconry of Lancaster . It is recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a designated Grade II \* listed building . A church on the site was built no later than the 11th century and may have existed prior to the Norman conquest of England . The tower dates from the 17th century , and much of the remainder of the building from a major renovation in the 18th century , although some of the fabric of the original structure remains . Further renovation and additions took place in the 19th , 20th and 21st centuries .

Soon after the Norman conquest , Poulton was granted to Lancaster Priory . In the 15th century , the church was given by Henry V to Syon Monastery in Middlesex . It returned to the Crown following the Dissolution of the Monasteries and from the 16th to the 20th century , the advowson ( the right to appoint a parish priest ) A belonged to the Hesketh / Fleetwood family .

The red sandstone building is faced with grey ashlar and consists of a nave , chancel , square tower and a Norman @-@ style apse . Its furnishings include a Georgian staircase , a Jacobean pulpit , box pews and hatchments . There are eight bells in the tower . Outside the church are the remains of a stone preaching cross .

= = History = =

There has probably been a church on the site of the present St Chad 's since before the Norman conquest of England in 1066 , and there is written evidence of one from 1094 . The Domesday Book of 1086 mentioned three churches in the hundred of Amounderness , although they were not named . Later documentary evidence suggests that they were probably the churches at Poulton , Kirkham and St Michael 's on Wyre . The dedication of Poulton 's church to 7th century Anglo @-@ Saxon saint Chad of Mercia lends weight to its pre @-@ conquest foundation , although it is possible that it was built between 1086 and 1094 .

The first documentary evidence of Poulton 's church dates from 1094 . After the conquest Amounderness , which included Poulton , was among the lands given by William the Conqueror to an Anglo @-@ Norman knight named Roger the Poitevin . In 1094 , Roger founded the Benedictine priory of St. Mary at Lancaster , as an offshoot of the Abbey of St. Martin in Sées , Normandy . He endowed the priory with the church and land at Poulton , approximately 20 miles ( 32 km ) away . Roger was eventually banished from the country and his possessions reverted to the Crown . In 1194 the hundred of Amounderness was given by King Richard I to Theobald Walter , 1st Baron Butler who became the High Sheriff of Lancashire . Though the advowson of Poulton ( the right to select a parish priest ) had been granted by Roger to the monks of Lancaster , Theobald initially thought that it should be included in his entitlements.A In 1196 he relinquished his right to Poulton ( along with that of Bispham ) , although he kept the advowsons of Preston and Kirkham .

In 1275 the Lancaster monks installed a vicar at the church . In 1291 , taxation assessments made on behalf of Pope Nicholas IV valued St Chad 's at £ 68 13s 4d ? the third richest church in Lancashire . In 1345 , repairs to the chancel were ordered in a letter from Simon de Bekyngham of Richmond to Sir William , the dean of Amounderness .

In 1415 , King Henry V dissolved the alien priories ( those under control of religious houses abroad ) and the church at Poulton reverted to the Crown . It was given by Henry to Syon Monastery in Middlesex . At the time of the English Reformation in the 16th century , St Chad 's became the Anglican parish church . Originally , the parish included Poulton , Carleton , Thornton , Hardhorn @-@ with @-@ Newton and Marton . The Syon Monastery was suppressed in 1539 during Henry VIII 's Dissolution of the Monasteries and St Chad 's again returned to the Crown 's possession . In the reign of Elizabeth I ( after a brief restoration of Syon by Mary I ) , the advowson was granted to John Fleetwood of Penwortham . The Fleetwood family remained the patrons of St Chad 's until the early 20th century .

Some time in the 17th century , the present tower was built , possibly during Charles I 's reign . In

1751 the church was extensively renovated . It was previously thought that the old church ( except the tower ) was completely demolished but recent evidence indicates that the " new " building still contains the outer walls of the previous structure . These original walls , of red sandstone , were faced with grey ashlar . The nave was rebuilt in 1753 with money from Richard Hesketh of Meols and his wife Margaret ( the daughter of Richard Fleetwood ) .

By the 19th century , the graveyard was full and had become a public health concern . It was overrun with rats , and dogs chasing the rats , both of which were damaging the churchyard . Finding sufficient ground for new burials was increasingly difficult and bones were often removed to a nearby charnel house . In 1849 , an extra charge was put on burials of people from outside the parish . In 1884 , the churchyard was closed to all burials and a cemetery was opened in the town.B

A round Norman @-@ style apse was added to the church in 1868 , the architects being the Lancaster partnership of Paley and Austin . The incumbent , the Rev. Thomas Clarke , paid for this addition , but died before its construction was complete . Architect J. S. Crowther oversaw further alterations in 1881 ? 83 ; a baptistery was built , the organ was moved and choir stalls were built in the chancel . Some work was done to the interior of the tower in 1908 . Renovations in 1955 included the addition of a central aisle and the removal of some of the church furnishings . The Victorian pulpit was replaced . A small extension was added north of the tower in 2005 .

The advowson to Poulton , which had been in the possession of the Fleetwood / Hesketh family for approximately 400 years , was sold in 1934 by Major Charles Fleetwood @-@ Hesketh to the Diocese of Blackburn .

= = Architecture = =

= = = Exterior = = =

The outer walls of the church are constructed of red sandstone with grey ashlar dressings ; the roofs are slate . The church plan consists of a nave , with a square tower to the west and a chancel and apsidal sanctuary to the east . There is a clergy vestry at the south @-@ east corner of the building .

The tower at the west end of the church dates from the early 17th century . It sits next to the south @-@ west corner of the nave , aligned with the south wall , because the former church plan included a north aisle ; the north wall of the tower meets the nave at its roof ridge . It is castellated and constructed of coursed roughly @-@ dressed stone . It has two diagonal buttresses , two angled buttresses and four corner pinnacles . There are slate belfry louvres on each side of the tower and clock faces on the north and south sides .

A small stone porch towards the east end of the south wall leads to the Fleetwood family burial vault . The doorway is inscribed with " Insignia Rici Fleetwood an hujus eccliae patronis , Anno Dni 1699 " .C There are two more doorways on the south side of the nave , both have been restored and have Tuscan columns , triglyphs and pediments . Above the doorways are oval windows , added in the 19th century which , according to Clare Hartwell , " add a touch of sophistication " . There are large round @-@ headed pairs of arched windows with Y @-@ tracery , ( possibly added later ) and plain architraves . There are three such windows on the north side and four on the south side with more round @-@ headed windows in the apse .

= = = Interior and fittings = = =

Internally , the nave measures 93 feet 6 inches ( 28 @. @ 50 m ) by 36 feet ( 11 m ) , the chancel ( including apse ) measures 20 feet ( 6 @. @ 1 m ) by 17 feet 6 inches ( 5 @. @ 33 m ) and the tower measures 12 feet ( 3 @. @ 7 m ) by 12 feet ( 3 @. @ 7 m ) . The ceiling of the church has shallow ribbed vaulting . There are galleries to the north , west and south , accessed by a Georgian staircase in the north @-@ west that has turned balusters . The north and south galleries are supported by plain Tuscan columns and both contain box pews that date from 1752 . Stained glass

dates from the late 19th century to the mid @-@ 20th century and includes work by Lancaster designers Shrigley and Hunt . The pulpit was constructed in 1955 in the Jacobean style from the four sides of a 17th @-@ century pulpit . It has arabesques and a portion of an inscription from the Book of Isaiah .

In the south @-@ west corner of the nave is a choir vestry , which was originally built as a baptistery . Its screen is made of carved oak , formed in 1883 from one part of the Fleetwood family box pew that was originally situated in the chancel where the choir stalls now sit . In 1883 , this pew had been described as " looking like a cross between a railway carriage and the centre piece of a gondola " . The wood is carved with emblems of the family including a double @-@ headed eagle , wheat sheaves and a griffin . The screen door comes from the box pew of another prominent local family ? the Rigbys of Layton . It has a carving of a goat 's head and is inscribed with " AR 1636 " .

Six hatchments hang in St Chad 's in memory of 18th century members of the Hesketh @-@ Fleetwood family . These hatchments are diamond @-@ shaped representations of individual coats of arms , painted for their funeral processions and then hung in the parish church .

There is a ring of eight bells hung in an iron frame in the tower ; they are rung from the ground floor of the tower . Five of the bells were cast in 1741 by Abel Rudhall of Gloucester . They were rehung in 1908 . The sixth bell was recast in 1865 by Mears and Co. of London . In 1919 , the church bells were still customarily rung to signal the town curfew between September and March . Two more bells were added in 1937 , cast by Mears and Stainbank .

= = Churchyard = =

To the south of the church there are the remnants of a stone preaching cross . The cross was originally situated on Poulton 's boundary and marked a resting place for mourners travelling long distances to bury corpses at St Chad 's . Only the two circular steps into which the original structure was set remain ; the cross shaft has been replaced by an octagonal pillar . The pillar was used as a sundial until the early 20th century when the gnomon was stolen . The steps function as a memorial for present @-@ day mourners at St Chad 's , in a small garden of remembrance . The churchyard is noted locally for its display of crocuses and other flowering bulbs in early springtime .

Although the churchyard has been closed to burials since 1884 , the ashes of cremated bodies have been interred in a small area to the west of the church since the 1950s . The paths in the churchyard incorporate gravestones that were set horizontally in 1973 . There are few gravestones still standing , but there are several table tombs . To the south @-@ east of the church there is a gravestone marking the grave of Edward Sherdley ( d . 1741 ) ; the stone features carvings of a skull and crossbones and an hourglass , and is known locally as the " pirate 's grave " .

= = Present day and assessment = =

St Chad 's was designated a Grade II \* listed building on 23 September 1950 . An active church in the Church of England , St Chad 's is part of the diocese of Blackburn , which is in the Province of York . It is in the archdeaconry of Lancaster and the Deanery of Poulton ; the benefice includes Poulton , Carleton and Singleton . The Rev. Martin Keighley was appointed vicar of St Chad 's in 2000 . The ecclesiastical parish of Poulton @-@ le @-@ Fylde St Chad includes the Church of St Hilda of Whitby in Carleton .