

St Martin's Church - Barholm

St Martin of Tours, the Patron Saint of Barholm, was for many centuries one of the most venerated saints in Europe. He was born around 315 in what is now Hungary. He joined the Roman Army and while still a catechumen, aged twenty two, he took compassion upon a poor beggar and cut his warm cloak in two, giving half to the beggar. About two years later he left the army and was ordained by St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, and eventually became a hermit for ten years on an island off the Riveiera. After this Martin became one of Hilary's clergy and founded the first religious community in Gaul, at Liguage.

In 372, he was forced by popular acclaim to become the new Bishop of Tours, although he continued to live the monastic life at what was to become the great monastery at Marnoutier.

Martin was a man of holy and self-denying life, who possessed a great gift of healing; he evangelised Gaul and destroyed many pagan temples. The date of his burial is observed as his Feast Day in the church calendar. He was one of the first men who was not a martyr to be venerated as a saint and there are 173 mediaeval churches in England who share this dedication.

The Bells

There are three bells, one has no inscription a second has the stamp of Robert Newcombe (Mayor of Leicestershire 1550) and Leweas in Gothic letters, the third has a similar stamp to the second and the inscription Marcus. In many parishes, old bells have been renewed or improved over the years with the result that the present ones are relatively modern. Not so at Barholm, where the combined age of the three bells amounts to over 1400 years. They would have rung in the village in Queen Elizabeth 1 time – a unique voice of the countryside.

In 1999 the bells were refurbished and two were brought back into working order by Taylors of Loughborough. Within the tower a lot of timber was found to be suffering from insect damage and rot and had to be renewed.

Bibliography

Information supplied by the St. Martin's Church Guide book written by Simon Cotton and produced by Roy Tricker and the following:-

J.T. Irvin "Barholm Church" Journal of Architectural Association (1891)

G.M. Livett "Notes on Barholm Church, Lincolnshire", Associated Architectural Society Reports (1913)

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