



Wadebridge Parish

Egloshayle Church

Early History

There is no written record of the foundation or dedication of Egloshayle Church. It is known to have existed at the time of Robert, Earl of Gloucester, illegitimate son of Henry I, for it is listed among the lands and churches in Cornwall which he gave to Richard, a man raised in his own household and described as his clerk. When the Earl died in 1147, Richard gave Egloshayle with the other churches to St. James in Bristol, which was a 'cell' or offshoot of the Benedictine Abbey at Tewkesbury. After Richard's death, by his wish, the churches, including Egloshayle, were given to St. Mary's, Tewkesbury, and St. Mary's, Bristol. These gifts of Richard's were confirmed by Earl Robert's son, William, Earl of Gloucester, in two undated charters. Earl William died in 1173 and in 1176 Bartholomew, the Bishop of Exeter, again confirmed these grants to the Benedictines. It is not known when Egloshayle passed to the See of Exeter. A note in Bishop Bronescombe's register mentions an agreement (technically known as a composition) between his predecessor, Henry Marshall, who was Bishop of Exeter from 1194-1206, and the Prior of Bodmin concerning the church of "Eglosseile". This indicates that it had by then been transferred to Exeter.

"Appropriations" were quite common in the 12th or 13th centuries. The patron, often a great Landowner as in the case of the Earl of Gloucester, would give the church, which he considered his property, to a religious house, which would take the income from it, appointing a priest to minister to it at a low figure, while the community kept the remainder of the rectorial tithes. The Bishops juggled in this way with the churches in their Sees.

Egloshayle was appropriated by Bishop Bronescombe in 1272 to the Canons of the Collegiate Church of Crediton but it was later exchanged for Lelant. It was again appropriated, this time by Bishop Quivil in 1284, when he gave the rectorial tithes to the recently instituted office of sub-dean of Exeter Cathedral. The first to benefit was Sir William de Bisunay, styled Senior Prebend of the Cathedral and Vicar of Eglos-hayle. His duty was to deputise for the dean in his absence and to act as Grand Penitentiary of the Diocese, which meant that he was Vicar in name only, for he was freed of parochial duties in order that he might be in residence (presumably in Exeter so that he might carry out his duties in the Cathedral) for eight months of the year, travelling throughout the diocese once annually in order to hear the confessions of those who, through illness, were unable to get to confession. The tithes from Egloshayle remained the property of the sub-deans of Exeter Cathedral until they were transferred to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1858. In 1876 the See of Truro was founded and Egloshayle became part of the new Diocese.

United Benefice of Egloshayle with St. Breoke

The United Benefice came into being on The 1st October, 1984, to serve the town of Wadebridge and a large rural area. It is bounded by the parishes of Bodmin, St. Minver, St. Issey and St. Mabyn. It is attached to the Archdeaconry and Deanery of Bod min. The United Benefice is made up of Egloshayle and St. Breoke, with their daughter churches of St. Conan's, Washaway and St. Mary's, Trevanion Road, Wadebridge.

St. Breoke Church lies in a beautiful valley a mile or so south west of Wadebridge. It was consecrated in 1259 and, like Egloshayle, was largely rebuilt in the fifteenth century. The first Rector of the United Benefice, the Revd. Raymond Hayne, was inducted on the 26th July, 1985. The Rectory was in Trevanion Road, Wadebridge and has since been sold.

A detailed Church history booklet by Joan Colquitt-Craven can be found on sale in the Church for £1