



Wadebridge Parish

St Conan's Church

Washaway, Wadebridge PL30 3AD

This small, attractive church is situated on the edge of the Pencarrow Estate and can be found on the Wadebridge to Bodmin road, set back amongst the trees. Built a century ago, its overall dimensions only just exceed 60' by 20', with seating claimed to be for about 80 – but at a squeeze! The pulpit is 16th century, and it is said to have been used by Martin Luther. Surprisingly the font, of celtic origin, is probably the oldest in England. The Molesworth–St Aubyn family from Pencarrow House continue to maintain close family links.

A brief History of St Conan's Church

The church was built in 1883 on land give by Lady Molesworth and was dedicated by the first Bishop of Truro. It was built to a design of Bishop Benson's as a Mission church and is very simple, standing at the heard f a valley in a tree shaded churchyard.

In it the treasures from the past: the font is among the oldest in Cornwall, Saxon in date and rescued from a rectory garden, where it had been acting as a bird bath. The 16th century wooden pulpit, with its carvings of biblical characters and scenes, was brought from Germany, and it is believed that Martin Luther preached from it.

The stained glass is outstanding in workmanship. The East Window, erected by Sir Hugh Molesworth–St Aubyn if memory of his wife has the words "He that dwelled in Love, dwelled in God" above the figures of Faith, Love and Hope. The windows in the North and West walls are in memory of Captain Frederick Aston and his son, both killed in action, serving it the D.C.L.I. in Flanders in 1915. Through the years many gifts have been made to the little Church, in 1969 Sir John Molesworth–St Aubyn installed electricity. The Abbott family added a chandelier and Mrs Brewer carpeted it.

In the early 1980's the Church was closed when the Chancel arch was found to be in a dangerous condition. Everyone who was connected with the church rallied round and helped by the people of the Parish Church and by various grants, spurred on by the Vicar, The Revd Malcolm Ellis raised £3000 to save the fabric. A service of thanksgiving was held by Bishop Rutt.