



ST MARY'S CHURCH

NEWNHAM MURREN
OXFORDSHIRE



THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION TRUST

89 Fleet Street · London EC4Y 1DH

Registered Charity No. 258612

PRICE: £1.00



THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION
TRUST WELCOMES YOU TO
ST MARY'S CHURCH,
NEWNHAM MURREN, OXFORDSHIRE

Many years ago Christians built and set apart this place for prayer. They made their church beautiful with their skill and craftsmanship. Here they have met for worship, for children to be baptised, for couples to be married and for the dead to be brought for burial. If you have time, enjoy the history, the peace and the holiness here. Please use the prayer card and, if you like it, you are welcome to take a folded copy with you.

Although services are no longer regularly held here, this church remains consecrated; inspiring, teaching and ministering through its beauty and atmosphere. It is one of 300 churches throughout England cared for by The Churches Conservation Trust. The Trust was created in 1969 and was, until 1994, known as the Redundant Churches Fund. Its object is to ensure that all these churches are kept in repair and cared for, in the interests of the Church and Nation, for present and future generations.

Please help us to care for this church. There is a box for donations or, if you prefer to send a gift, it will be gratefully received at the Trust's headquarters at 89 Fleet Street, London EC4Y 1DH (Registered Charity No. 258612).

We hope that you will enjoy your visit and be encouraged to see our other churches. Some are in towns; some in remote country districts. Some are easy and others hard to find but all are worth the effort.

Nearby are the Trust churches of:

LOWER BASILDON, ST BARTHOLOMEW
7 miles south of Wallingford off A329

WALLINGFORD, ST PETER
Thames Street

MONGEWELL, ST JOHN THE BAPTIST
1 mile south of Wallingford off A329

ST MARY'S CHURCH

NEWNHAM MURREN, OXFORDSHIRE

Revised by CHRISTOPHER DALTON

NEWNHAM MURREN is a tiny place close to the east bank of the River Thames, just over half a mile south of Wallingford Bridge. 'Newnham' means a newly settled place and 'Murren' comes from Richard Moren, Lord of the Manor in 1261.

The church lies behind Newnham Murren Farm in an attractive churchyard full of snowdrops and wild chives. It consists of a nave with western bellcote, north porch, south aisle and chancel and dates from the early Norman period, c.1120. The chancel was renovated in the 13th century, possibly by Richard Moren. The south aisle appears to have been added in the 14th century and has a two-bay arcade of that period. In 1849 the church was much restored, a new bellcote and west window were added and the south aisle and porch were rebuilt.

From the south, the church has a rather unusual appearance, with its tall narrow chancel and relatively short nave, the roof of which continues unbroken over the low south aisle. The walls are of flint, with stone dressings and copings to the gables, and the roofs are covered with hand-made red tiles. The original small windows of the 12th and 13th centuries survive in the north wall of the nave and on both sides of the chancel, but other windows date from 1849. The ornamental buttress supporting the western bellcote has a carved corbel-head at its foot and there are a further pair on either side of the west window. The church is entered by the original Norman doorway.

The plastered and white-painted interior, though simple, has many interesting features. The small rectangular *nave* has an ancient oak *roof* with tie-beams and crown-posts and a good south *arcade* in the Decorated style, both evidently dating from the 14th century. The Norman *chancel arch* has bold impostes and a plain rounded arch with added Victorian inscription. On the south side is a horseshoe-shaped *squint*, giving a view of the the altar from the south aisle.

The *chancel* also has an old oak *roof*, though not so ancient as that in the nave and probably dating from the 16th century. Each tie-beam has a king-post supporting a collar, and the purlins have curved wind-braces. The triple-lancet *east window* was renewed in 1849 but its rear-arch and shafts are though to be original 13th-century work. The *piscina* and *sedilia* on the south side and the double *aumbry* on the north are likewise 13th-century.

Of the fittings in the church the *font* is Norman although heavily re-cut. It has a cylindrical stem and a plain bowl bearing traces of the original lock. The oak *pulpit* has pairs of fine 17th-century panels carved with ornamental scroll work and central bosses. The *altar* is a good 17th-century oak communion table and the *rails* and *chancel stalls* are worthy 19th-century work.



Right: General view of the chancel looking through the arch from the nave



The brightly coloured 19th-century *stained glass* in the east window, depicting four biblical scenes, is by Powell's.

On the south wall of the aisle is a *monument* with a Latin inscription to Letitia Barnard who died in 1593:

Letitia Barnarde wife of Francis Barnarde died on 19th August 1591. While she lived she was a woman of the greatest modesty, faithful to her husbands, good to the poor and loved by her neighbours. She had three husbands: Edward Skinner, Francis Mercer and Francis Barnarde. She left four children behind her; by Edward Skinner a daughter named Joanna, by Francis Mercer a son called Rudolph, by Francis Barnarde a son and a daughter, Francis and Anne. May the Lord grant that they follow their mother's example.

A brass shows Letitia kneeling in prayer with her four children; in front of her hands is a hole probably made by a bullet fired by a soldier involved in the siege of Wallingford in 1646, during the Civil War.

The *painting* on the north wall is a copy of the *Deposition* by Rubens. Unusually this is a church where electricity has never been installed. The two *bells*, neither of them inscribed, are thought to have been recast in the 17th century. The *registers* date from 1687 and are now deposited in the County Record Office.

The parish of Newnham Murren, formerly joined to North Stoke and Ipsden, was in 1908 united with Crowmarsh Gifford. By the 1970s the church had not been used for many years and on 23rd January 1973 it was formally declared redundant. It came into the care of the Redundant Churches Fund, now The Churches Conservation Trust, on 28th May 1974.

*Photographs by Christopher Dalton and
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