

# **S<sup>t</sup> CUTHBERT'S CHURCH Over Kellet**



## **A SHORT HISTORY**



**by Carol Allen, BA MA PhD MCIfA**  
**A Short History of St Cuthbert's Church Over Kellet**

It is most likely that there has been a church in the village since Saxon times, as the granite stone font just inside the door is of basic design and probably dates from about AD900.

The first church may have been built of wood but its exact location is unknown.

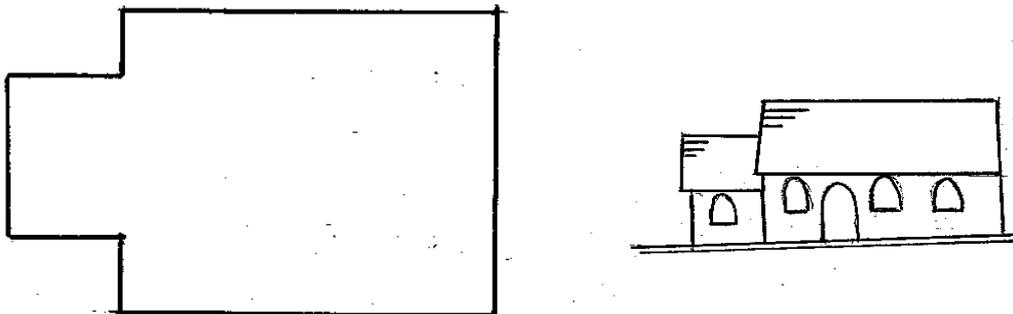


The church which stands here today has been partially rebuilt and modified several times and these changes can often be seen in the surviving stonework. These features are described below.

A series of sketches show how the church may have looked at each of the stages described below.

In about 1215 there was a stone church on this site.

### Sketch about 1215

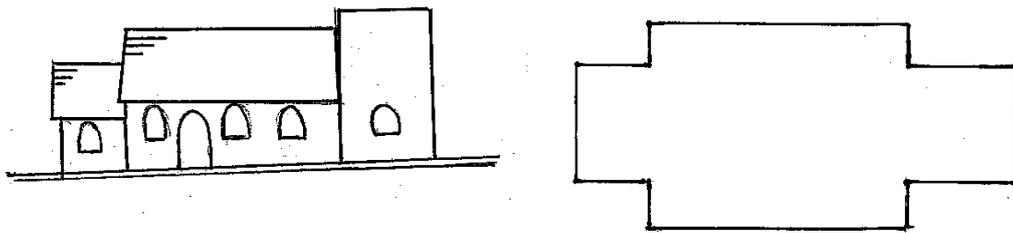


In the south aisle the stonework of the western arch is quite different in style and colour to the rest of the arches. This shows how the stonework of the whole church would have looked in the early 1200s. Similar stonework on the north side indicates that the original church had a central nave of the same size as present but probably had a narrow north aisle similar to that on the south of the church.



In the mid-1300s a tower was added at the west end. The style of the time would have been a lower tower than that seen now, and it may have been made taller in the mid-1500s. It is a heavy construction with a turreted parapet and diagonal buttresses and can be best viewed from outside.

### Sketch about 1360



The tower has three bells with inscriptions. One may be medieval and is inscribed 'Sancte Petre ora pro nobis'. A second bell has an inscription 'Jesus be our speed 1664' and the third is inscribed 'T Mears of London 1824'.

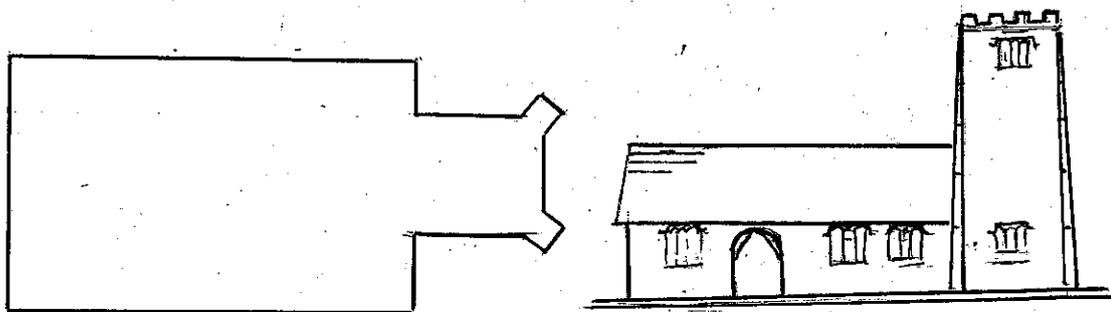


Around the late 1400s there was some rebuilding, but it is not clear what took place as only one pier or column of these renovations remains. The pier is of stone but has a larger diameter and is rounded in form with a deeper capital or top. There are no clues to what the rest of the church might have looked like at this time.



In the 1500s, possibly about 1540, much of the older church was demolished and rebuilt, with only the one ancient arch, the pillar to this arch, and the tower being retained. The north and south aisles were rebuilt with new arches, the north one being made wider than the south. The south wall probably sits on the earlier foundations. The sanctuary at the east end was enlarged to the width of the rest of the church.

#### Sketch about 1540



In the early 1800s, possibly about 1805, a small vestry room was added on the north side of the tower. The present pews were added in 1817 and church records show that they were sold off to wealthier parishioners.

Then in 1863-64 the east end was rebuilt and the present porch was added.



In 1909 the exterior walling was covered in roughcast concrete, the small dormer windows were inserted into the sanctuary, and a boiler room was added on the south east corner. Fragments of an ancient cross built into the exterior wall near the vestry were left uncovered.

In 1929 the area at the base of the tower was screened off and a doorway was made into the vestry. Pews were removed from the back of the church to make a passageway between the north and south aisles. In 2006 a toilet was added on the north side beside the porch.



**Fragment of ancient cross**



Sketch 1856, 1909, 2006

