

The 17th Century Abbey – as Lord Scudamore knew it...

The Cistercian Abbey of Dore was dissolved by King Henry VIII on 1st March, St. David's Day, 1537. The monks were removed and pensioned off, while lay brothers and abbey servants either returned to their families or eked out a living as best they could. However, a part of the nave had been in use as a Parish Church and there are indications that Services continued to be held, perhaps spasmodically, in the ruins of the once magnificent Church. These were troubled times and the way the format of Church Services was arranged, and the religious views expressed, changed radically according to the wishes of the current sovereign. Under Henry VIII Church Services were expected to be Catholic but without any adherence to the Pope in Rome. During the reign of his son, King Edward VI (1547-1553), plainer, Protestant Services were imposed. His half-sister Queen Mary I (1553-1558) attempted to 'turn-the-clock-back' and return the country to a full communion with the Pope and the Roman Church. It must have been an exceptionally confusing and fraught time for the ordinary churchgoer. Queen Elizabeth I managed to live longer than her siblings so her changes became more firmly set. She famously tried to follow a middle course, fining extremists on both sides who did not attend Sunday worship. Elizabethan Services were Protestant but Elizabeth herself, while disliking married clergy, encouraged Church music and refused to give up altar furniture in her own chapel.

King James I was brought up as a Protestant in the Scottish tradition but his mother had been the Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots. So his accession in 1603 gave hope to those with extreme views on both sides. It was the frustration felt at his refusal to condone catholicism that led to our own Whitsun Riot of 1605 [see Dore Article 9, 1997] and the much more famous Gunpowder Plot of 1605. In fact recusancy was a source of income and in February 1604 fines for non-attendance at Anglican Churches rose to £20 a month, coupled with land-forfeiture, while priests were imprisoned and even executed. At the Royal Court, though, the Queen, Anne of Denmark, was at least sympathetic to Catholicism and supported Catholic marriages for her sons. It all led to a resurgent interest in church ceremonial and, of course, was laying the foundations for the religious upheavals of the English Civil War.

In the midst of all this four people stand out as having an influence on the Parish Church of Dore. These were: Dr. Richard Hooker (1554-1600) then the most respected theologian of the Church of England; Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626) Bishop of Winchester; William Laud (1573-1645) Archbishop of Canterbury; Sir John Scudamore of Holme Lacy (1601-1671) 1st Viscount Scudamore of Sligo.

Churches are functional buildings that reflect the requirements of the Services that take place within them. Richard Hooker's ideas were a considerable influence on Bishop Lancelot Andrewes, who managed to be both non-controversial and also to be much appreciated by King James I. The principles concerned were known as *the beauty of holiness* which poetically described the appearance of the buildings and how they were designed to reflect the dignity of the Church Services. Graham Parry, in his

recent book, describes how Bishop Lancelot Andrewes became an influential exponent of these changes....'in 1619, he remodelled his chapel at his London base, Winchester House in Southwark, in ways that made clear his own alignment with the ideas and ideals of Richard

Hooker'. However, 'with *his profound reverence for the sacrament of the Eucharist, Andrewes refined and elaborated on the comeliness and fit order that Hooker had commended*. He had the altar moved to the eastern end of the chapel, where it was raised on a platform of three steps. A sanctuary was created by railing off the altar area, which was approached by two steps. Whether these risings were part of the medieval chapel or introduced by Andrewes is not known, but this feature of *honouring* the altar by raising it up, and the raising of the chancel above the level of the nave, would become customary in Laudian churches and chapels. The altar furniture was notably sumptuous: a large cushion for the chalice to rest on, a smaller cushion for the service book, two candlesticks, a silver tun for the wine, and a silver-gilt container for the communion wafers. Embroidered cloths were on display around the altar. The pulpit stood by the altar rails. In the body of the chapel, centrally placed, were a music table around which singers stood, and the lectern, raised up on three steps. Anthems were sung, and incense was used in the services. Here, to all intents and purposes, were the layout and the accoutrements that would influence the design and furnishings of private chapels and college chapels during the next two decades, and be an inspiration to liturgically conscious ministers throughout the country.'

Bishop Andrewes' chapel though noted for its harmony was considered modest and most people used the Chapel Royal at Whitehall as the example to follow. William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury evidently liked the merits of Andrewes' chapel because he reproduced its design in his chapel at Lambeth Palace ... and Archbishop Laud was the great friend of Viscount Scudamore who repaired Dore Abbey.

Viscount Scudamore was a diplomat and Ambassador to France for King Charles I from 1635 to 1639 during which time he altered and adorned the embassy chapel according to the sacramentalist ideas of Archbishop Laud. Scudamore was pious and subscribed to the view that the outward appearance of a Church and the manner of the observance used in the Church Services, should reflect the dignity in which God should be worshipped. He was also a practical man and served each of his interests, said to be God, cider and cattle in that order, as well as he could. Scudamore held lands and tithes that had formerly belonged to Dore Abbey and he was married to Elizabeth Porter who had inherited lands of the dissolved monastery of Lanthony Secunda in Gloucester. When three baby sons died in quick succession Scudamore became convinced that it was God's judgement on them for living on the proceeds of former monastic property. He turned to Archbishop Laud for advice, writing that perhaps he should finance restoration principally of Dore Abbey. Laud diplomatically suggested he follow his conscience and so Scudamore began to restore Dore Abbey as a Parish Church. It was natural that he should also turn to Archbishop Laud for ideas and advice on its design. The result, in the words of Graham Parry, is that *the most thorough creation of a Laudian Church is at Abbey Dore*.

I have always been puzzled by the apparently empty area between the screen and the altar rails in the chancel of Dore Abbey. However, may I suggest that if you compare the design of Bishop Andrewes' Chapel with the layout of Dore you will see striking similarities. I suggest that Viscount Scudamore copied the Chapel layout. Dore Abbey still has:

- The pulpit, against the altar rails, though it seems to be on the opposite side in Dore.
- The music table (7 on plan) described as 17th century by Jim Tonkin (with a modern top). It is now in the chancel and one of its uses is for the signing of the register at weddings.

- Two long forms of wood still in the Abbey may well be those numbered as 12 on the plan.
- Three chairs are shown on the plan and the one at G3 is described as the chair where the Bishop sits at Communion. It is still in the Abbey and is known as the Bishop's Chair.

Then there are the Vestments and Altar Furniture which are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. They are described in detail in Dore Article 3 Autumn 1994 and in Dore Article 9 Autumn 1997. They include:

- A pair of candlesticks of turned lignum vitae, 4½ ins (11.5 cms) high. The moulded shafts screw into dome-shaped bases with 3 in. (7.5 cms) diameters. See BB on plan.
- A cushion 9½ ins (24 cms) by 3½ ins (9 cms) of green figured velvet used to support the service book on the altar. Originally described as late 15th century Italian, it is now described as 17th century English. See 1& on plan.
- Two napkins of fine linen, English which may originally have been a pair of corporals used to be placed under and over the chalice and paten. See 2 A & B on plan.
- The cover of linen with three parallel inserted bands of English bobbin lace may serve the same purpose as C1 the 'linnen napkin (called the Aire) embroidered with coloured silks' on the plan.
- The wafer box with fitted lid would seem to have been used by a recusant priest because of the fragments used to line both box and lid, but it may correspond to A on the plan.

In fact there seems to be no doubt that at Dore we have an almost unique, and nationally important, survival of a Laudian Church with many of the items of furniture and accoutrements that were considered liturgically essential. It may well be that a close examination of other items may allow more of these artefacts to be identified. The area between the screen and the altar rails, where communicants came to receive Holy Communion, is now no longer simply empty but was an area for singers and the ecclesiastical necessities – with 'the great Bible' in a central position. This was the Church that was reconsecrated on Palm Sunday, 22nd March 1634, Viscount Scudamore's birthday and he must have been well pleased with its beauty and liturgically appropriate appearance.

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Acknowledgements:

My sincere thanks to Esther de Waal and Graham Parry.

References & Further Reading:

Ruth E. Richardson, *The Friends of Dore Abbey Newsletters* Dore Article 3 Autumn 1994 and in Dore Article 9 Autumn 1997.

Graham Parry, *Glory, Laud and Honour, the Arts of the Anglican Counter-Reformation*, published 2006 Boydell Press.

Jim Tonkin and Joe Hillaby in *A Definitive History of Dore Abbey*, edited by Ron Shoesmith & Ruth E. Richardson, 1997 Logaston Press.

Michael Neville, *Dore Abbey Herefordshire 1536-1912*, in the *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club*, 1975 part III, pages 312-317.

Latest Discoveries:

On Saturday 4th September 2010 we gave a tour of Dore Abbey to members of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain who were attending their annual conference. During the course of this there was discussion concerning the Laudian screen and whether it had been painted. The Churchwarden, Philip Wilcocks, noticed blue paint. We then examined the screen with a torch and I caught the gleam of gilding. Subsequently Philip and I examined the gallery and found traces of gilding on that as well.

While it is known that medieval screens were painted and gilded, I understand that it has apparently not previously been known that Laudian screens and church furniture were also treated this way. We had certainly thought that the lovely wood was all the decoration required at Dore Abbey. I suppose it is possible that even the roof decorations were painted.

Also, a descendant of Sir George Gilbert Scott visited Dore Abbey with his wife and he told me that the top halves of the side screens by the pews are Tudor in date. They were reused from another building, perhaps from *Newcourt*, the childhood home of Blanche Parry. It really is interesting how new information surfaces about the abbey and the later church.

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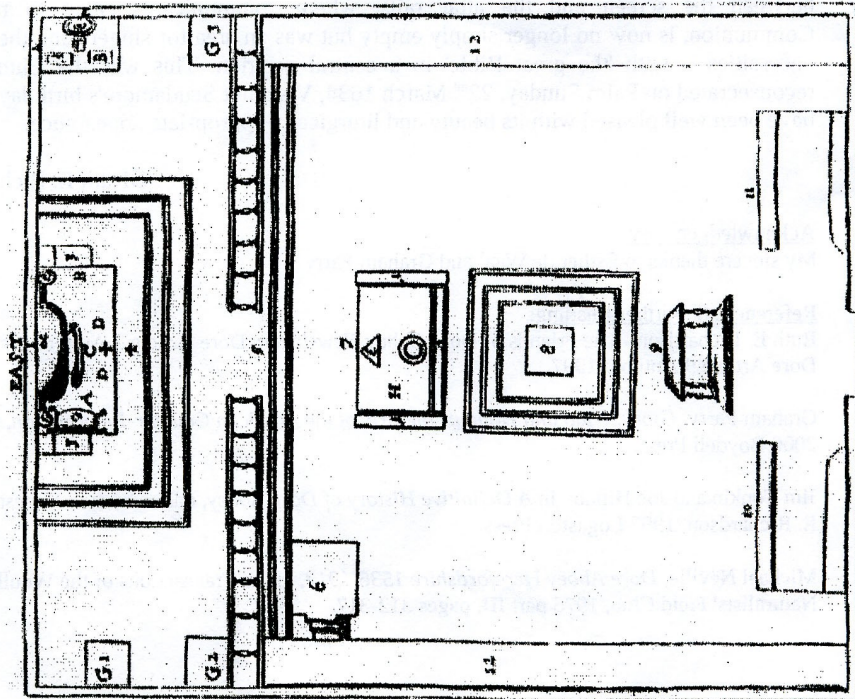
Near the base on each side of the opening, the Laudian Screen has a carved head of a serious face and, on the opposite side, a merry face. It seems possible that these are meant to represent the sun and the moon.

In *'How To Read a Church'* (published Rider 2003) Richard Taylor writes of the Crucifixion: *Darkness then came over the land. In reference to this, in some medieval and early Renaissance pictures the sun and the moon appear, with the sun on Jesus' right and the moon on his left, occasionally with human faces and veiled with cross-hatching, or part-covered by a cloud. They also show the two natures of Jesus, the sun representing his divinity and the moon his humanity, or the New and Old Testaments, since the Old Testament (the moon) was thought by St. Augustine to be simply a relection of the light shed by the New Testament (the sun).*

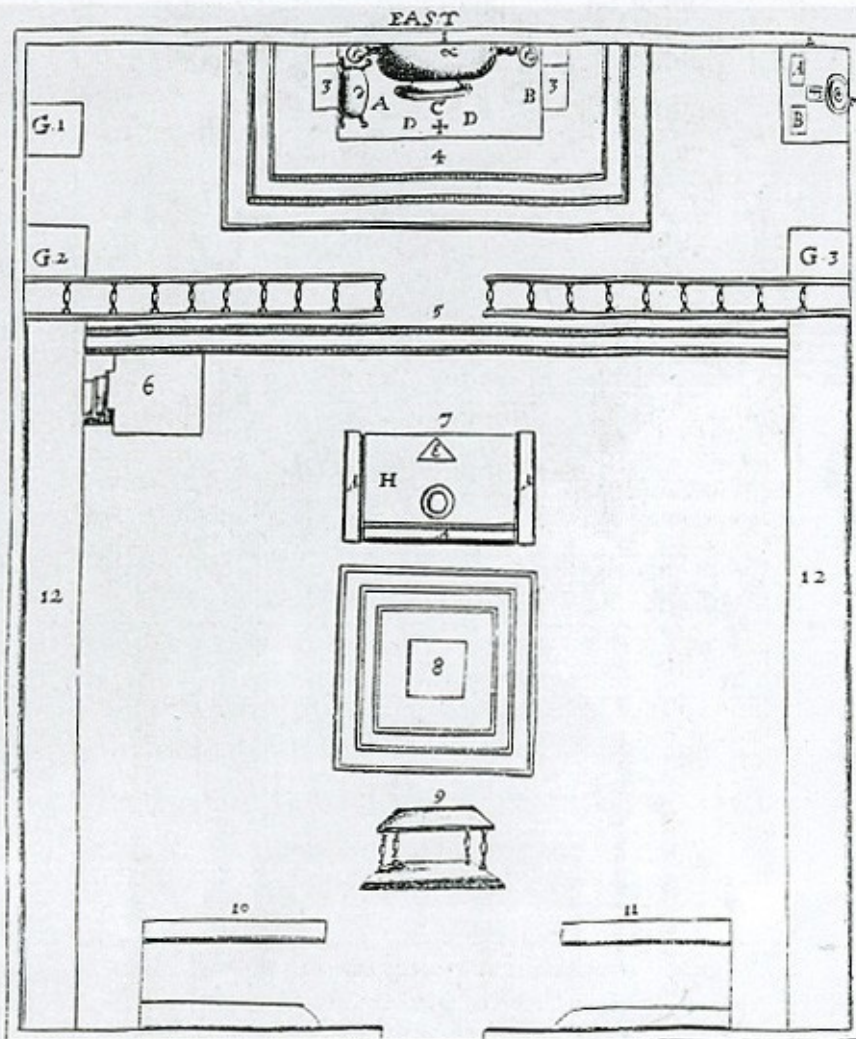
The carved faces on the Laudian Screen appear to continue this Medieval tradition.

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Layout of Bishop Lancelot Andrewes' Chapel, Winchester House
 from William Prynne's 'Canterburies Doome' (1646)
 reproduced in 'Glory, Laud and Honour, The Arts of the Anglican
 Counter Reformation' by Graham Parry (2006)
 (I have slightly modernised the text so any mistakes are mine:RER)



1. The Alter 1 yard $\frac{1}{4}$ high, 1 yard $\frac{1}{4}$ long, 1 yard broad
 x A Cushion
 BB Two Candlesticks with tapers } the daily furniture
 C The bason for the Oblations } for the Alter
 & A Cushion for the Service booke
 A The silver & guilt Canister for the wafers like a wicker basket & lined with
 cambrick laced
 :B: if Tonne [that is a silver tun] upon a cradle
 C: the Chalice haveing on the outside of the boll Christ with the lost sheepe on
 his shoulders
 on the top of the cover the wisemens starr both engraven
 it is covered 1 with a linnen napkin (called the Aire) embroidered with
 coloured silkes
 :D:D: Two patens + the Tricanale being a round ball with a skrew cover
 where out is fore 3 pipes, and is for the water of mixture
 2. A sier [sizeable] table on which before the communion stand
 A & B upon two napkins
 E a bason & Ewer to wash before consecration
 F the towell appertaining
 3:3 the Kneeling stooles covered and stuffed
 4 the footpases with three ascents covered in a Turkey carpett of firrboords
 G.G.G. Three Chairs used at ordinations or prelates communicant
 5. the septum with two ascents
 6. the pulpitt
 7. the musique table with (AAA) three formes
 :E: a Triquertrall Censor wherein the clarke putteth frankincense at the
 reading of the first lesson
 :H: the naricula like the keele of a boat with a halfe cover and a foot out
 of which the frankincense is poured
 & thereon the great Bible
 8 a footpace with three ascents on which the Lectern standeth covered
 9. The Faldstone whereat they kneele to read the Litanie
 10. is the chaplins seate where he readeth service
 11. a seate with a canopie over it for the B.P. [Bishop] but at the Communion
 time he sits on G3
 12.12: two long formes for the familie [servants] In the place of this writing
 should have chosen the outward chappell.



1 The Altar 2 1/2 high 1 1/2 long 2 1/2 broad

2 A Cushion

3 Two candlesticks with tapers

4 The basin for Oblations

5 A Cushion for the service books

6 The silver gilt canister for the water

7 The wooden napkin

8 The table

9 The table

10 The table

11 The table

12 The table

13 The table

14 The table

15 The table

16 The table

17 The table

18 The table

19 The table

20 The table

21 The table

22 The table

7. The layout of Andrewes' chapel, from William Prynne's *Canterburies Doome* (1646).