



Notable features

The most obvious feature of The Ancient Church of St Lawrence is its diminutive size, it is said to be the smallest church in the country being only 20 feet long, 11 feet wide and the door is only 6 feet high. When an adult stands by the picture on the right it looks like something from a children's picture book. Having said this, the church has even been described as a place of devotion.

Outside The church is in a bower of trees and at the front is a short lamp post like the one that grew in the church. The church is surrounded by a delightful array of gravestones. The graveyard has been extended westwards in the nineteenth century and you will notice that you now step down into the church. There is evidence of how things got buried over the centuries. **Inside** The interior is plain and simple as it is a nineteenth century church with very little evidence of anything earlier. It is like to have attended church two hundred years ago.

The origins of the church

The history books and therefore the tourist guides are silent on the history of the Ancient Church of St Lawrence. Its style and size show that it has Norman origins. According to Thomas Pennant who toured the Isle of Wight in 1771 it was the family chapel of the ancient manor house of the De Aula family. There are many references to the church in the church Thirteenth Century. At that time the parish of St Lawrence was seven large parishes with the dividing lines mostly following the coast. It is written that the De Aula's manor house was the largest in the area because of the developments in the area since the thirteenth century. The church was named after St Laurentius who was martyred in 258. His feast day is 10th August, which coincides with the annual Pennant Memorial Race as the tears of St Lawrence.

The Victorian period and after

In the Nineteenth Century the population of the area began to increase significantly. Many wealthy people were attracted by the health giving properties of life in Ventnor and the Undercliff. To improve accommodation a stone porch was added in 1805 by the Honourable Charles Anderson.

Brannon's sketching of the church in 1843 shows that the chancel had been extended eastwards 10 feet to where it is today. However, this was still not sufficient to meet the needs of the growing community and they chose to follow the lead taken by St Boniface Parish church 4 miles away on the other side of Ventnor and build a new parish church.

The new church of St Lawrence held its first service in August 1876.

You can buy a more complete history inside the church.



of these proportions. Most of the fittings are making it easy to imagine what it would have been like to have plain glass except for the one of Jesus above the altar.

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How many features can you spot at St Lawrence's Old Church?

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Outside



The Bell from Appuldurcombe Priory



Family Obelisk

Inside

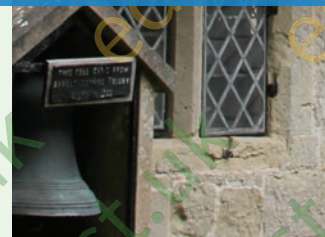


Altar and East Window



Piscina

Font



Plain Medieval Windows



Celtic Cross



Litany Desk



Blocked up north door



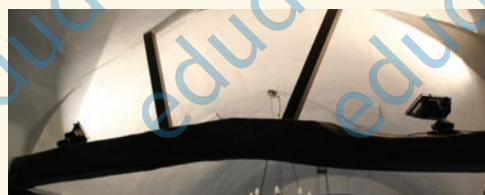
Sunday School Seat



Bell Tower



Family Burial Plot



Plain beam to support west arch



Coat Pegs

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