



Holy Cross Church, Tetcott
A Brief Guide and History



Holy Cross Tetcott

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Trevor May

2014

Welcome



Dear Reader,

August, 2014

I welcome you to read this small book about Tetcott and its beautiful parish church, set in the rolling countryside beside Tetcott Manor. Visiting Holy Cross Church you will find much to interest you; but before you do so, take some time to read something of its fascinating history. By buying this book, you also help us to ensure the church's future.

As Priest in Charge of the Ashwater Benefice, I am responsible for the spiritual life of all who live within our six parishes which are: Ashwater, Beaworthy, Clawton, Halwill, and Tetcott with Luffincott. I hope that as you discover more about this lovely church and its history you will want to engage with its future – as a growing, thriving and vibrant centre of worship, prayer and work within our community.

Welcome to Holy Cross Church!

Blessings,

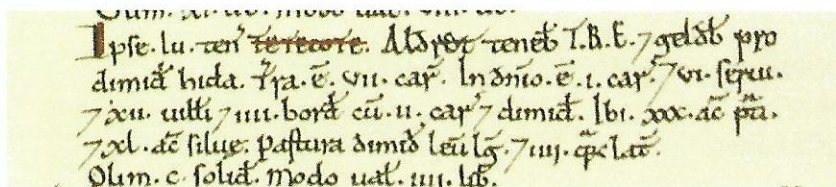
Rev. Jane Lucas

The Earliest Church

Christians were worshipping in Tetcott long before the present church was built. Much of the south west of England was evangelised in the fifth and sixth centuries by missionaries from Wales and Brittany. Amongst them was St Germanus of Auxerre, who visited the peninsula in 429 and again in 443; the parish church of Germansweek is dedicated to him. The church of St Petroc, Hollacombe, is a reminder of another missionary to these parts. St Petroc, who was born in south Wales, evangelised the Britons of what is now Devon and Cornwall, and is patron saint of the latter county. He died around the year 564.

Most early churches would have been small, and basic in construction. Few would have had a tower, and most would have consisted simply of a nave without transepts. They would have served a small population centred around the local manor. The 'manorial system,' to which this gave rise, was one of mutual rights and responsibilities. The lord of the manor protected his peasants who, in return for the right to cultivate part of the land for their own use, were obliged to labour also on the lord's land, known as his demesne.

We have some idea what Tetcott was like at the end of the eleventh century, for the manor is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. One of William the Conqueror's supporters was Juhel, son of Alured, who was one of the commanders of the Breton forces on the Norman side. After the Conquest he was made feudal baron of Totnes, and was given over one hundred manors in Devon, including that of Tetcott



The entry for Tetcott in the Domesday Book



Mediaeval ploughing, from an old manuscript

In contrast to the small fields which are characteristic of much of the landscape today, mediaeval fields were much larger in size, and were divided into strips for cultivation. Each peasant's strips were scattered across the fields, which helped to give a mixture of better quality and poorer quality land to all. Such a system can be glimpsed in Braunton Great Field, one of only three open fields still surviving in England. Nearer home, traces of what appears to be mediaeval ridge and furrow cultivation were found immediately to the west of Blagdon Cross when a survey was made in 2012 for a proposed wind turbine.

In 1150 the manor of Tetcott was held by Sir William Pipard, whose family held it until 1350, It then passed through the female line, and was eventually sold to the Arscott family (see pages 10-13).

The first parish priest of whom we have knowledge was William Norris, in 1310. It was around this time the present church came to be built, and it was consecrated around 1338-9 by Richard Francis, Bishop of Waterford, acting as suffragan for John Grandison, bishop of Exeter.



Looking Around

The Church of the Holy Cross is approached from a courtyard and forms part of an interesting and important group of buildings. On the opposite side of the yard is Tetcott Manor, built in 1603. The date above the entrance is misleading, however, as it was moved here from Tetcott Mill during some twentieth century renovation work. Around the year 1700 the house was downgraded to servants' quarters, and a fine, new brick house was built to the east of the present building (or the right, as we face it). When the Molesworths inherited the estate, the new house fell into disrepair, as the family's principal seat was at Pencarrow, in Cornwall. In 1831 the new house was dismantled, while the old manor house became a farmhouse. It remained as such until 1925, when the Molesworth-St Aubyns again took up residence here.

The approach to the church is through a gate, to the right of which are stables which appear to be associated with the new house built in the eighteenth century.

The fabric of the nave and chancel of Tetcott church date from the

13th century. On the north side of the church there are several narrow windows from that period. The south transept dates from either the 13th or the 14th century, while the vestry (now containing the organ) is probably a 19th century addition.

The tower, which is of redstone with an occasional band of granite, probably dates from the 15th century, and is similar in style to the towers in some neighbouring villages such as North Tamerton, Bridgerule and Pancrasweek.

After entering the church through the south porch, the first item of

note is the Norman font, which predates the building and is a relic of the earlier church. The origin of the stone is apparently unknown. It is of a plutonic (or igneous type) other than granite or polyphant from Cornwall. The font has a top border of crosses saltire, and at the corners of the base are grotesque figures, one of which appears to have arms coming from the top of his head.



Detail from memorial window to T.W. West

In the southwest corner of the nave, just beyond the font, is a stained glass window in memory of Temple Walter West, who was Rector from 1854 until his death in 1880. The window was made by John Hardman & Co, noted stained glass manufacturers of Birmingham, and collaborators

with A.W.Pugin. Temple Walter West was responsible for the reconstruction of the chancel between 1874-6 (see page 19).



One of the 16th century bench ends

As you progress down the aisle, take notice of the bench ends. Many of these date from the early 16th century, and are carved with leaves and architectural detail. A writer in 1849 spoke of 'uncouth foliage and devices', while Pevsner described them as 'elementary decoration'. Others might regard them as splendid examples of carving in a folk tradition.

Most of the other woodwork in the church is of a later period. The oak pulpit was described in 1894 as newly carved, and is probably the work of John Northcott, a wood carver living in Ashwater. His work, including the pulpit at Clawton, is to be found in a

number of neighbouring parishes. New choir stalls were erected in the chancel in 1911.

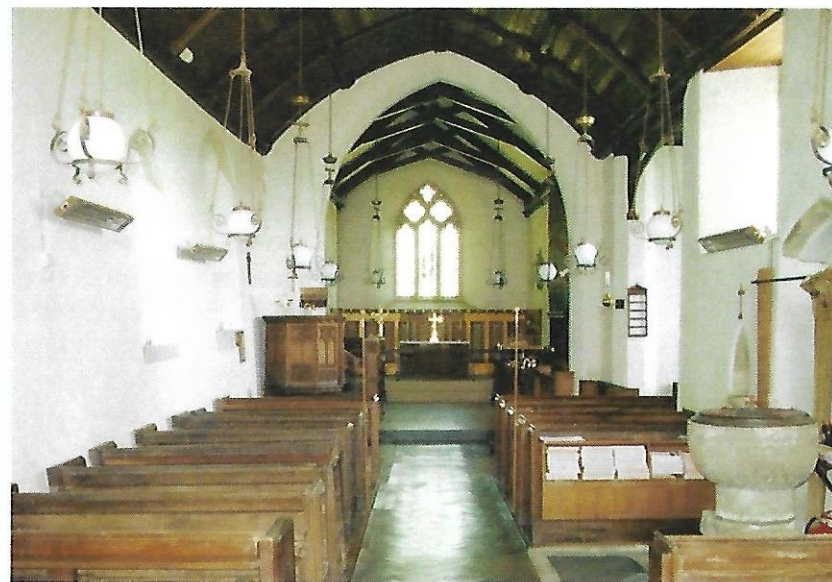
The interior roofs of the nave and south transept were encased in oak in 1904, the bosses being carved in John Northcott's Ashwater workshop.

An inventory of church goods in 1553 states that Tetcott had three bells. In 1811, however, two of the bells were sold in order to defray church repairs. The remaining bell was recast in 1829 by John Taylor of Buckland Brewer (whose business was incorporated into Taylors of Loughborough, the renowned bellfounders). But this cannot be the same bell that was taken down in 1968 as the inscription makes clear. That bell was cast in 1717 by Ambrose Gooding, and carried the inscription 'INO BEALE Wm DINHAM WAR-DENS'. The difficulty is that there is no record of John Beale or

William Beales ever having been churchwardens of Tetcott, so the bell was clearly second-hand. But where did it come from, and how did it end up in Tetcott? And what happened to the Tetcott bell that was recast in 1829? Local tradition provides one possible explanation. In his history of Tetcott Church, Harold Tucker recalled that it had long been believed that the treble bell at neighbouring North Tamerton had come from Tetcott. North Tamerton's back five bells were recast by Taylor in 1830, and Tucker recounted a theory which the Rev J.G.M. Scott (rector of Tetcott in the 1950s) had shared with him;

[He] believes that Taylor, having failed to persuade the people there [i.e. North Tamerton] to have a ring of six, cunningly cast the new bell for Tetcott to a note and scale that would make a treble for their five, and when the Tamerton people heard it, they did a deal by which they acquired the Tetcott bell and Taylor supplied Tetcott with a larger second-hand bell and installed it for nothing - hence the absence of any mention in the accounts.

When this bell was lowered in 1968, it was found to be cracked, and was replaced with the tenor bell from Luffincott, which was no longer in use. (see page 23 below)



The interior of Tetcott church in 2014

The Arscotts and Tetcott Manor



Memorial to John Arscott, died 1675

Carved pew end in the Arscott Chapel



The most interesting memorials in Tetcott church are to be found in the south chapel, sometimes known as the Arscott Chapel. The family pews contain some carved woodwork from the 17th and 18th centuries.

The senior branch of the Arscott family (which traced its pedigree back to 1300) was based at Dunsland House, Holsworthy (destroyed by fire in 1967) while the junior branch settled in Tetcott around 1550. Here it remained until 1788 when, on the death without issue of the last John Arscott, it passed (through the descendant of a great-aunt) to the Molesworth family.

The third John Arscott is the most interesting one. His memorial contains the comment, 'What his character was need not here be recorded.' Some have detected a touch of irony in these words, for he has acquired a reputation as a boorish and intemperate man of gross habits. This is no doubt the result of essays written about him in the nineteenth century by the folklorists, the Revd. R. S. Hawker and the Revd. Sabine Baring-Gould, each of whom preferred a good story to historical accuracy.

John Arscott had a pet toad

which came out of its hole by the doorstep in answer to its master's call. To the astonishment of guests, the toad would take its food from his master's table, and superstitious country people came to believe it was the squire's familiar.

Arscott's behaviour during Divine Service in church was allegedly impious. He was said to amuse himself by feeding a spider which nested near his pew with flies which he had brought in a bottle. He would throw apples at the priest, and if the clergyman read the Bible poorly, and concluded by saying, 'Here endeth the lesson,' Arscott would cry out, 'Thee'st better never begun it.'

Other evidence paints a quite different picture. Throughout his life he fulfilled the role of public service expected of his class. He was returned as Member of Parliament for Ashburton (1741-54), joining his father, Arthur Arscott, who represented Tiverton (1722-47). When war broke out with Spain between 1739-48 (the so-called "War of Jenkins' Ear") the young Arscott was appointed Commissary General responsible for the pay and provisions of the Marine regiments which were newly raised for that conflict. He withdrew from national office in 1754, but remained active in the life of a country squire and magistrate, while still continuing to campaign locally for family members.

A tribute to Arscott, written after his death by a keen hunting friend, Sir William Elford, listed his virtues rather than his vices:

As a Magistrate, he was active and determined; softening, however, the rigours of extreme justice and punishing offenders rather like a good parent than an inflexible Judge; as a friend, he possessed the two chief virtues which adorn that character, sincerity and constancy.

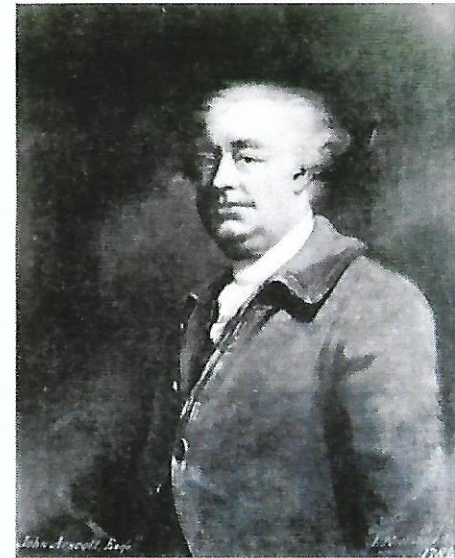
Elford also wrote,

Christianity was his firm belief and profession, which he exemplified by a constant and regular practice of the duties enjoined by it.

The popular view of John Arscott as an over-bearing and uncouth

buffoon, only really at home on the hunting field, is very possibly a gross distortion. Part of that reputation no doubt arises from another character immortalised by the Revd. R.S. Hawker. This was 'Black John', one of Arscott's retainers who was credited as the last of the jester dwarfs who were once a common feature of the great houses. Little seems to be known about him other than what Hawker wrote. One of his specialities designed to entertain guests after dinner was to tie several live mice together by their legs and to swallow them one by one. Then, by means of a string he would pull them up again from the depths of his stomach. Another trick was to have a live sparrow placed into his mouth while, at the same time, his hands were tied behind his back. He would then 'mumble' the unfortunate bird, tearing off the feathers with his lips and teeth. The description of Black John portray him as a feral creature, who would curl up on the rug by his master as if he were a faithful mastiff.

James Northcote, the celebrated artist, painted portraits of both John Arscott and Black John. That of the jester is striking, but we are left wondering if this is a true likeness or one designed to exaggerate his wild reputation.



Opposite: Tetcott church from the north. The building on the right is a stable block, probably built at the time of the eighteenth century house, now demolished.
Top left: Arscott of Tetcott, painted by James Northcote
Top right: Black John of Tetcott, painted by James Northcote
Bottom: Old Tetcott House, dismantled in 1831



The Rectors of Tetcott from 1310

Year	Name		
1	1310	Master William Norris (or Norreys)	
2	?	Sir Robert de Holedich (d.1341)	
3	1341	Sir Reginald Pipard	
4	1349	Sir Nicholas Mouche	
5	1427-8	Sir Thomas Godyer	
6	1438-9	Sir John Clarke	
7	1505	Sir William Marke	
8	1513	Sir Richard Wedthorpe	
9	1547	Sir Richard Avery	
10	1567	Sir David Walter	
11	1585	Sir James Wood	
12	1589	Master John Holmes	
13	1596	Roger Squyer, M.A. (or Squier)	
14	1605	Abraham Smith, B.A.	
15	?	Thomas Ware	
16	1663	Peter May	
17	1682	William Rowe	
18	1689	Edward Hawkins	
19	1697	Richard Turner	
20	1732	John Sanxay, B.A.	
21	1768	Samuel Cory, B.A.	
22	1782	William Tickell, S.C.L.	
23	1784	John Rouse	
24	1788	Thomas Upjohn	
25	1811	Oliver Rouse, B.A.	
26	1816	William Molesworth, M.A.	
27	1846	Paul William Molesworth, B.A.	
28	1854	Temple Walter West, M.A.	
29	1881	Herbert Upton Squire	
30	1905	Walter Geary Knocker, M.A.	
31	1913	Herbert Ernest Everett Laughton, M.A.	
32	1925	Charles Edwin Southern	
33	1937	Hedley Thomas Millman	
34	1941	Norman John Nisbett	
35	1946	John William Mayer	
36	1951	Harvey Phillips	
37	1954	Norman McGee	
38	1958	John Gilbert Mortimer Scott	
39	1967	Vicars Walker Bell, M.B.E.	
40	1978	Edward Shewell	43 Deborah Kim May 2005
41	1986	Leslie Brookhouse	44 Jane Eleanor Lucas 2008
42	1999	Geoffrey Daryl Harris	

Notes

- 2 In mediaeval times the title, 'Sir' was given to ordinary priests. 'Master' indicated the priest had graduated from a university.
- 4 This was the period of the Black Death, a plague which caused a particularly high death rate amongst parish clergy.
- 9 The first Anglican Prayer Book was introduced in 1549. A Catholic rebellion against the new Prayer Book sprang up at Sampford Courtenay, near Okehampton, leading to a five week siege of Exeter before the rebellion was put down.
- 15 Ware resigned in 1663. He succeeded Smith at some time after 1622. Harold Tucker suggests that he may have been a Puritan cleric, installed during the Commonwealth period.
- 20 See pages 13-14
- 21 Sanxay died in in 1768. Tucker cites Cory as a successor, but he does not appear in the CCed database. In all probability he was a curate, possibly related by marriage to Thomas Melhuish, patron of Clawton.
- 22 William Tickell also appears to have been a curate . Upjohn certainly was, and had a stipend of £30 a year.
- 23 John Rouse does not appear on the CCed database. A memorial in the church records his death in 1818, and states that he had been rector for 33 years - or since c 1785.
- 25 Oliver Rouse is listed in the CCed data base as curate, appointed in 1803. He is described as rector on a memorial of 1814.
- 26 William Molesworth was curate in 1816 (CCed). In the same year he was appointed domestic chaplain to the 2nd Marquess of Exeter.

This list is based on *The Parish Church of The Holy Cross Tetcott: A History*, by the Rev. Harold Tucker, 1994; and *CCED Clergy of the Church of England Database*, at www.theclergydatabase.org.uk

James Sanxay: Rector, 1732-68

James Sanxay was born in Exeter in 1690. His father, the Revd. Jacques Sanxay had been a Huguenot pastor in the region of La Rochelle. Driven out of France in 1685, he took ship for Holland, but a severe storm drove the vessel into Plymouth. From there he moved to Exeter. St Olave's church in Fore Street was at that time disused, and the Bishop allowed the French refugees to use it for worship, and Jacques Sanxay became pastor between 1686 and 1693.

James was the fourth of Jacques's six children, and the first to be born in England. He graduated from New College, Oxford in 1712. He then served for about twelve years as lecturer (unordained minister) at St Mary's chapel in Penzance. In 1729, he was presented to the living of Beaworthy by Arthur Arcscott, and subsequently to the living of Tetcott, where he was installed in 1733. We get some idea of the life of an eighteenth century country parson from Sanxay's answers for an Episcopal Visitation in 1744:

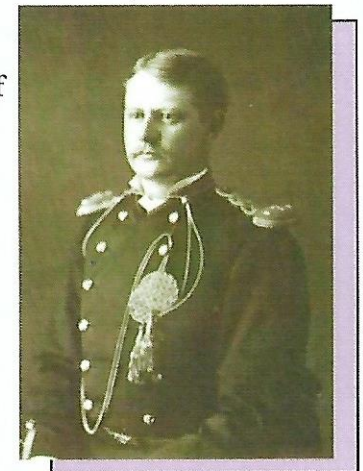
I have twentyseven Familys in my Parish: none of them are Dissenters. . . . There is no Public or Charity School in my Parish. . . . There is no Almshouse, Hospital or other charitable Endowment in my Parish: nor have any Lands or Tenements been left for ye Repair of my Church. . . . I reside personally upon my Cure & in my Parsonage House. . . . I perform Divine Service every Sunday in my church & sometimes upon Holydays. I preach sometimes once, sometimes twice a day. . . . I administer ye Sacrament of ye Lord's Supper four times a year in my Church. . . . I have about forty Communicants in my Parish. who usually receive, & about yt number of them communicated at Easter last past. . . . I have no particular Times for Catechising children, but am always ready to do it, whenever ye Parishioners will send their Children & servants to be instructed. . . . I have no Chapel within my Parish.

James sanxay Rector

. . . And Custer's Last Stand

Sanxay's parochial duties were light. The regular Sunday services at Beaworthy were taken by the Revd. John Rouse, the Rector of Highampton, to whom Sanxay gave one-third of the parochial income. Like many other clergy Sanxay devoted much of his time to scholarly interests, and in 1754 he published the *Lexicon of Aristophanes*, a work which was highly regarded. After his name on the title page appear the letters 'O.T.D.' Asked what this signified, he explained that most authors liked to see letters after their name, and lacking anything more than a B.A. he put 'O.T.D.' which stood for 'Of Tetcott, Devon.'

James Sanxay had eight children, the youngest of whom (John, born at Tetcott in 1746) emigrated to New York at some time before 1773. He remained a Loyalist during the Revolutionary War, and was forced to flee to Nova Scotia in 1783. He eventually returned to New York state, where he died in 1811. John's son Frederick married a cousin of President Garfield, and his daughter, Charlotte married James Calhoun in 1844 and had a son, also called James, in the following year. In 1872 he married Margaret E. Custer, the sister of George Armstrong Custer. Calhoun, who had a commission in the 7th Cavalry, was described as, 'Custer's dearest of all friends on earth' The two men died, side by side, at the Battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876 - forging one of the many links between the Ashwater Benefice and the United States.



James Calhoun (1845-1876), the great-great grandson of the Revd. James Sanxay, Rector of Tetcott. He died at Custer's Last Stand.

Tetcott in the 19th Century

The church as we see it today is very much a product of the nineteenth century. This was a time when great interest was shown in ancient buildings, especially churches, and much effort was put into maintaining and restoring them, though often in a heavy-handed way.

In his history of Tetcott church, the Revd. Harold Tucker quotes a letter from the Rural Dean in 1807:

To the Rector and Churchwardens of the Parish of Tetcott. You are each of you required, as far as your duty shall respectively extend, and the law requires you, forthwith to put the Parsonage House, and all other buildings and appurtenances thereunto belonging, together with the Church, Tower, and Chancel of your said Parish into complete repair; and more particularly you are required to repair the floor and the roof of the Church, to place a new canopy over the pulpit and a new cover to the font, [and] to whitewash the Church. . .

N.B. I hereby certify that Mr John George the Churchwarden has implicitly followed the above directions, and I most sincerely thank him for his exemplary conduct.

William Holland Coham

As is the case today, maintenance of the fabric of the church required constant attention, and Tucker gives many examples from the churchwardens' accounts of repair work between 1816 and 1842. Some indicate features which no longer exist; for example in 1820 a Mr Phillips was paid £7.12s,0d 'for finding materials and painting, Lord's Prayer, Belief [Creed?] 10 Sentences from Scripture, Frame of 10 Commandments and Partition behind Singing Seats.' The 'singing seats' seem to have been a raised area at the rear of the nave to accommodate a choir, for unlike Clawton church there does not appear to have been a gallery for musicians. But musicians there certainly were, for annual payments were made for strings for two violins and a cello.

Church music changed dramatically in 1872, when the organ (built by Geake of Launceston) was installed. It was apparently the

first pipe organ to have been installed in Holsworthy Deanery, apart from Holsworthy itself, and was given by the Rector of that time, the Revd Temple Walter West. He was much influenced by the Oxford Movement, which placed much emphasis on ritual and ceremony in worship, and attracted worshippers from other parishes as well as from Tetcott.

West was also responsible for the restoration of the Chancel, although as with many such 'restorations' the result did not meet with the approval of all. In 1926, Beatrix F. Cresswell gave her opinion that:

The reconstruction of the chancel has eliminated all evidence of the Rood Loft doors which formerly stood on the North side; still more regrettable is the loss of the Screen, which remained until 1858. Mention is also made of a squint between the transept and the chancel, and two niches in the North Wall, most likely for images. The church is furnished with open seats, where a few old bench ends decorated with conventional designs are preserved.' (Quoted in Tucker, page 4)

The restoration was carried out between 1874-6 at a cost of £600 (or approximately £27,500 at today's values).

Many of the profound social and economic changes of the nineteenth century passed Tetcott by, or came late. Agriculture remained the dominant occupation, assisted in some respects by the opening of the Bude Canal in 1823, which facilitated the bringing in of sand to improve the dominant clay soil. Holsworthy was connected to the nation's railway network in 1879, which brought goods in more cheaply, but also enabled the ambitious to leave more easily. At the time of the agricultural depression from the 1870s to the 1890s, the population of Tetcott gradually went into decline. In 1871 a population of 207 was recorded, a number which had fallen to 187 by 1901.



Coat of arms of Queen Victoria. Unknown date.

The War Memorial

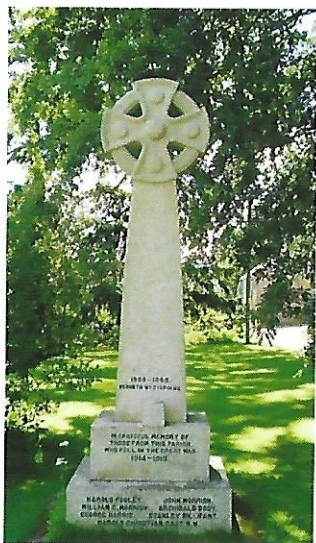
The war memorial is located in a garden area east, of the church, and beside the track that leads to the Tetcott to North Tamerton Road. It is in the form of a Celtic wheel cross on a tapering shaft, and was the gift of Sir Hugh Molesworth St Aubyn.

Seven names are inscribed on it from the First World War, and one from the Second World War.

Private **Archibald Body** was in the 4th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) and was killed in action on 3rd May 1917. He has no known grave, but is commemorated on the Arras Memorial. Captain **Harold Christian** RN was serving on HMS President, a shore establishment, and died from injuries received in a motor accident in 1917. Private **George Harris** was in the 8th Battalion, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. He died of wounds on September 1916, and is buried in Greece. Private **John Morrish** of the 10th (Service) Battalion, Devonshire Regiment was killed in action in Salonika in 1917, and is also buried in Greece. His brother, **William C. Morrish** was a Gunner in the Royal Field Artillery. He died in 1916, and is buried in the cemetery of the Trimulgherry

Cantonment in Secunderabad, India. Private **Harold Pooley** of the 1st (City of London) Battalion (Royal Fusiliers), London Regiment was killed in action in May, 1915; he has no known grave, but is enrolled on the Ploegsteert Memorial in Belgium. [Richard] **Stanley Sillifant**, a Private in the 1st/5th Battalion (Territorial), Lancashire Regiment is buried in the Awoingt British Cemetery, near Cambrai. He died of Wounds on 23 October 1918.

The Second World War inscription is that of Marine **Kenneth William Stephens**, of No. 48 Royal Marine Commando, who died in November 1944. He has no known grave, but is commemorated on the Plymouth Naval Memorial.



HMS Tetcott

A display cabinet in the south (Arscott) chapel contains a Naval ensign from the Second World War. The circumstances of its being here were set out in the *Holsworthy Deanery Magazine* in March 1942:

Warship Week is over and we can look back with pleasant memories of our visitors from HMS Tetcott. There was a parade service on Sunday, March 1st, attended by two officers and eight ratings from HMS Tetcott as well as members of the local Home Guard. A white ensign presented to the Church by the Commanding Officer of HMS Tetcott was laid upon the altar and blessed at the beginning of the service and has since remained in the Church. As a result of entertainments during the week the sum of £7.4s.9d [worth more than £200 today] has since been sent to the ship for the comforts and amusements fund.

HMS Tetcott was a 'Hunt' class destroyer, completed in 1941, and allocated for duty in the Mediterranean. She left the United Kingdom in March 1942 as one of the escorts of a convoy of troop ships heading for east Africa via the Cape, where the convoy divided, with part splitting off for India while the remainder passed through the Suez Canal, reaching Alexandria in June.



HMS Tetcott quickly saw action, On 12th June she picked up 80 survivors when HMS Grove was torpedoed. The following day the Tetcott accompanied a convoy taking supplies to Malta; the convoy was attacked by about 40 dive-bombers, but Tetcott managed to return safely to Alexandria. HMS Tetcott was largely involved in anti-submarine work, but in November 1942 escorted a convoy from Alexandria to Malta which marked the final and effective relief of the Island.

In July 1943 the Tetcott took part in the Allied landings in Sicily, giving covering fire to the assault troops. Towards the end of that year, HMS Tetcott moved to the western Mediterranean, giving support to the Allied landings in Italy, including the landings at Anzio.

With the end of hostilities in Europe in May 1945, HMS Tetcott returned to Portsmouth for repairs. Apart for a short period in dock in Alexandria in 1944, the ship had not been non-operational since she had left England in 1942. HMS Tetcott was back in Gibraltar in July 1945, being refitted to take part in operations against the Japanese. She was there when the Japanese surrendered, whereupon she was ordered back to Portsmouth to join the reserved fleet.

In September 1956, the Tetcott was towed to Milford Haven for scrapping. Her memory lives on, however, and there is a thriving association for veterans and their descendants.



St James, Luffincott

It is well worth paying a visit to the pretty little church of St James, Luffincott. Until 1914, when it was united with the parish of Tetcott, Luffincott was a separate parish. Regular services continued to be held there until 1979, when the church was placed into the hands of what is now the Churches Conservation Trust; despite that, the occasional service is still held there, often in the summer and at Christmas.



Structurally, the church is rather unusual, for the roof is mediaeval, but the walls are 18th century, the body of the church having been rebuilt in 1791. Georgian sash windows are to be found on the north side of the nave. A visitor in 1849 noted that at that time all the windows were of the sash type. It appears that at the time of a further restoration in 1893, simple Gothic windows were inserted on the south side and east end.

Until 1950, the church had three bells, but these were removed as the bell frame was in danger of collapse. The tenor bell, cast in Exeter by Thomas Pennington in 1625, was subsequently re-hung in Tetcott church, where it replaced a cracked bell.

A window in Luffincott church commemorates links with the Lippincott family of America. Joshua Ballinger Lippincott (whose forebears were Quakers who had migrated to America) founded his publishing house in 1836, originally specialising in Bibles, prayer books and other religious works.

It is difficult to trace the precise links with Luffincott, although the family certainly came from Devon. J. M. Wilson, in his *Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales*, notes that the Manor of Luffincott was anciently called Loghincott, and that it was held by a family of that name from the time of Henry



III to that of Henry V. The Lippincotts were sufficiently aware of their origins to assist in the restoration of the church.

Detail from Lippincott window

Tetcott Parish Registers

Such registers as are not in current use are deposited with Devon Heritage Services, an amalgamation of the Devon Record Office and the Westcountry Studies Library. The address is:

Devon Heritage Services
Great Moor House
Bittern Road
Sowton
Exeter
Devon
EX2 7NL
Tel: 01392 384253
E-mail: devrec@devon.gov.uk

The following registers are available:

Baptisms, marriages, and burials	1599-1722
Baptisms, marriages, and burials	1723-1812
Marriages and banns	1755-1812
Marriages	1814-1836



Further Reading

These notes on sources may be of some help to readers who wish to delve a little deeper into the history of Tetcott Church, but are limited to those which are more easily accessible. The most recent work is *The Parish Church of the Holy Cross, Tetcott: A History*, by the Revd. Harold Tucker, privately published in 1994. The early history of Christianity in Devon can be approached through two essays by Canon Professor Nicholas Orme, in *The Pilgrim's Guide to Devon's Churches* (2008). This book also contains a gazetteer of all of the county's churches. The architectural history of the church is best approached through Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner, *Devon, in The Buildings of England* series (second edition, 1991). Alternatively, the church's entry on the *National Heritage List for England* can be accessed through the English Heritage website.

Sabine Baring-Gould's essay on John Arscott, in *Devonshire Characters and Strange Events* (1908) can be accessed through the Internet Archive, as can R.S Hawker's essay on Black John, found in his *Footprints of Former Men in Far Cornwall* (1903). The fascinating history of the Sanxay family is told by Theodore F. Sanxay in *The Sanxay Family, and Descendants of the Revd Jacques Sanxay* (1907, available on the Internet Archive). For the history of HMS Tetcott, see Shawn Dymond and Janet Mason, *'Tetcott' the Thrill of the Chase* (2006)



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