

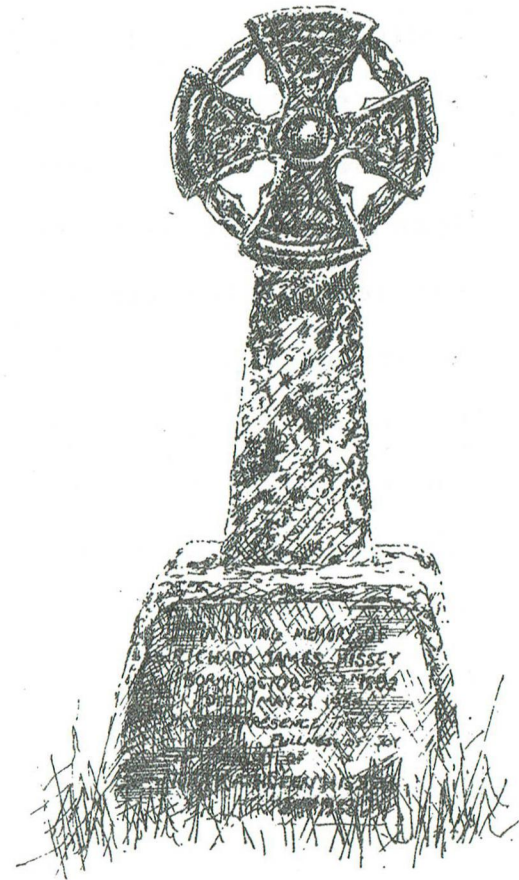
The Parish Church
of
Saint Mary's
Cusop.



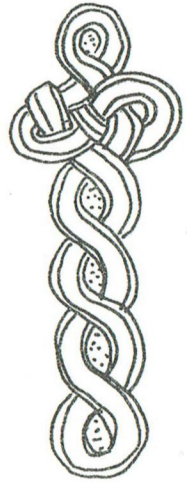
a brief guide.

A BRIEF HISTORY

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With acknowledgement to previous
guide of 1978.



MAY 1995.

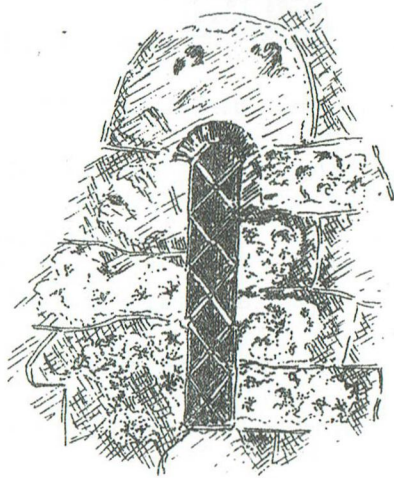


Cusop Church was originally dedicated to Saint Cewydd, a fifth century Celtic saint. He was the Welsh rain saint, and like England's Saint Swithin, the weather for forty days following his festival on the second of July, was said to be determined by the weather on that day. His name is found in many place names, including Cusop.

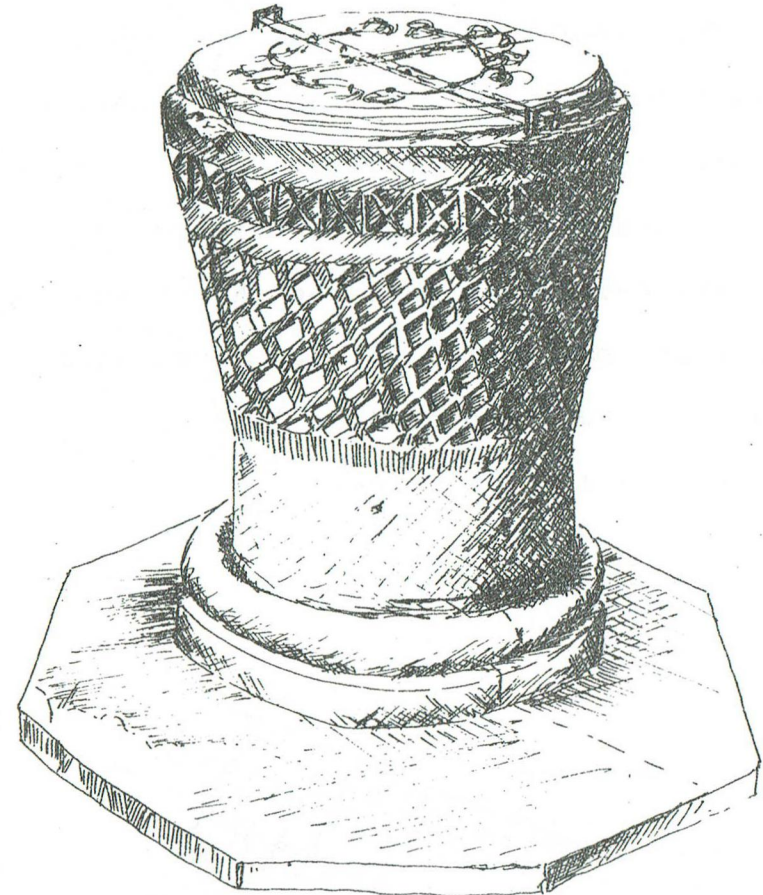


he Normans changed the dedication to Saint Mary, and so it has continued. Sometimes Cusop has been under Welsh influence, and sometimes English. One of our treasures is a Prayer Book of 1664, in Welsh, showing this was the language at that time. For many years our patron was the Prior of Llanthony Abbey and glebe money and tithes were paid to the Prior. He appointed our rector and these are recorded from 1290. Cusop is now the eastern extreme of the Diocese of Hereford, and the Dulas Brook, which is our parish boundary, is also the boundary between England and Wales. We are truly a border parish, and with our neighbouring parishes form the 'Border Link Group.'

The church has Norman features, the chancel arch, a small south window to the left of the porch, and a blocked-up north door, with a huge red sandstone lintel, which can easily be seen from outside at the back of the church. The north door was known as the 'devil's door', his exit to the 'place of darkness' at the time of a baptism. The north wall of Cusop Church was called 'Golgotha' and skulls were built into this wall.

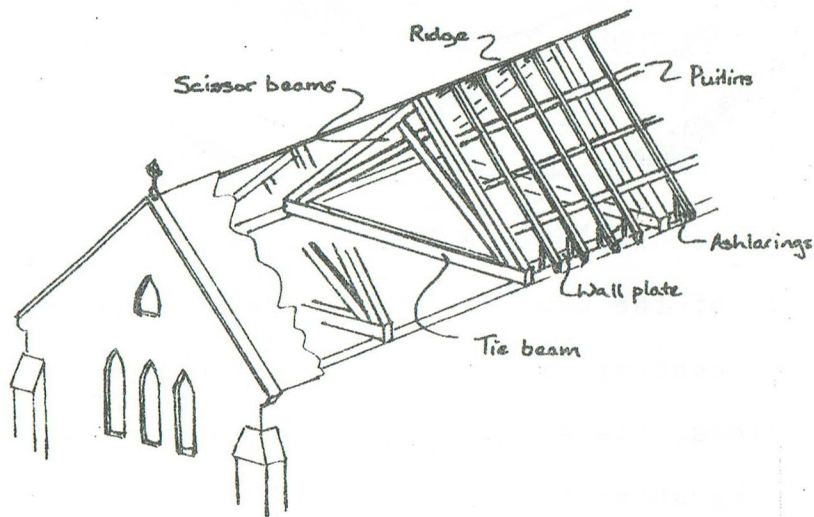


The Font is Norman, and tub-shaped, with saltire crosses and a trellis of lozenges.



There was once a Rood Loft and Screen, in front of the Chancel Arch, from where in the 16th. century, musicians led the singing at services. Now all that is left is the built-in doorway above the War Memorial.

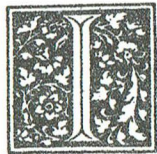
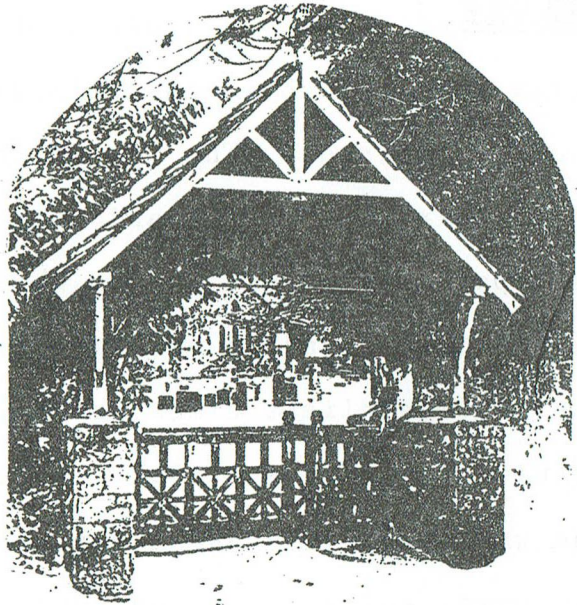
The roof is 14th. century and heavily timbered, with six pairs of heavy scissor beams. This roof style is found throughout the Welsh Marches, an area rich in timber and influenced by Celtic settlement. This lovely roof was uncovered during the restoration in the 1850's. Before this the church was damp and uncomfortable, and sometimes used as a barn. It was reopened in 1858 with great pride and celebrations



In our churchyard we have four very old yew trees, the largest of which has a girth of over thirty feet, which means it is over two thousand years old. The age of the yews, and the circular churchyard suggest it was a pagan site long before Christianity reached Cusop, and it became a preaching site. From earliest times the yews had a useful as well as a symbolic role. The wood was used for weapons especially long bows, and yew was considered the best wood to use. The shape of the trees is probably due to the years of pollarding for weapons.



he Lychgate was built in 1896
and skilfully repaired in 1994.



n the field opposite is the site
of Cusop Castle, and nearby stood
the stocks and whipping post.

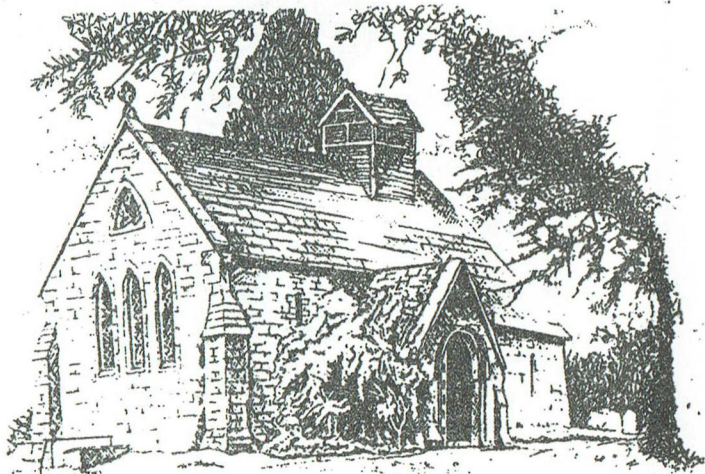
Cusop School, closed in 1942, stands close
to the churchyard wall, and opposite the
other gate, the cottage was the house for
the priest. The road which now goes down
the hill to Hay, was made at the beginning
of this century when the houses were built
on the hill.

Our bells are a carillon, an Italian
style which consists of bells in the
bellcote, rung from within the church.

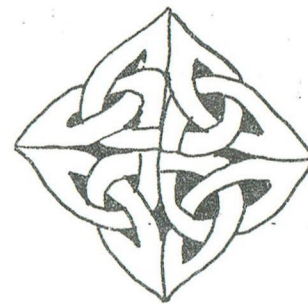
The organ was moved to Cusop Church
in the 1880's and the dedication sermon
was preached by Rev. Andrew Pope, who
features in Kilvert's Diary. The organ
was originally at the Moor, a mansion
to the east of the parish, now
demolished.



Buried in our churchyard is our martyr, William Seward. He was a friend of the Wesleys, George Whitefield and Howell Harris of Trefeca, which is near Talgarth. He was injured on a preaching tour in South Wales, in the autumn of 1740, and died a week after speaking to hostile crowds on Black Lion Green in Hay. His grave lies on the south side of the church, and a tablet to his memory is on the wall of the nave.



Also sadly remembered is an important criminal case, the murder of Mrs Katherine Mary Armstrong, whose husband was a respected inhabitant of Cusop, and a solicitor in Hay. Major Armstrong's trial and execution are still remembered by many parishioners, and feature regularly in books and films.



Patron.	Date	Rector.
Prior of Llanthony	1290	David de Merchynt.
"	1300	John Wroth
"	1316	Vincent Wroth
"	13 ?	Reginald Lane
"	1421	Richard Walsh
"	1430	David ap Griffith
"	1449	Llewelyn Jones
"	14 ?	Llewelyn ap Thomas
"	1505	William Harbord
Sir Nicholas Arnold	1563	David Jenkins
"	15 ?	John Rawlins
John Arnold Esq.	1687	Henry Rogers
Nicholas Arnold Esq.	1709	David Williams
Edmund Harley Esq.	1731	Henry Gwilym
Edward Harley	1745	Walter Vaughan
Earl of Oxford		
Sir Francis Chatton Bart.		
Sir Francis Dashwood Bart.		
and trustees of	1754	Edward Edwards
Edward Earl of Oxford		
Earl of Oxford	1804	Edward Hamley
"	1828	D.Rodney Murray
Lady Langdale	1855	
Colonel Seacome and		
Wm. Donne, Trustees	1878	Albert Henry Seacome M.A.
Arthur Labron Lowe Esq	1891	John Lloyd Keating M.A.
"	1894	George Derwer Pagden M.A.
Miss J.B.Thomas	1901	David Christmas Moore
Mrs.C.J.Lilwall	1905	Francis Long-Price
J.Cecil Clay Esq. and		
Alline Bushell Esq	1907	Douglas H.G.Sargent M.A.