



## The Church of St Mary, Iping

*We believe a church has stood on the present site in Iping since Anglo-Saxon times. The original building was probably a wooden structure as no remains have been found. The present building has all the charm of a small country church and the indefinable atmosphere of a place where generations of Iping parishioners have worshipped for centuries.*

### **Today's Church Building.**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the enclosing of Iping and Chithurst Commons caused shifts of population locally. Also, the paper mill at Iping provided additional employment as an alternative to agriculture and the population of Iping increased. The old Norman church was too small to meet the needs of worshippers. In 1840 the old church was demolished and replaced by a larger building, incorporating a tower designed by Thomas Greenshield.



Another population swing resulted in the church being found to be too large. It was therefore, again replaced in 1885 by a smaller building, designed by the well-known Victorian architect, Loftus Brook, in the style of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The new church retained Greenshield's tower which houses a single bell, retained from the old Norman church, cast by Roger Tapsil, and dated 1616. A further link with the old church can be seen built into the east wall of the porch. This is a small 13<sup>th</sup> century grave slab. This is unusual because instead of the usual cross the head is in the form of a fleur-de-lys.

**Iping Church Today.** In 1959 Iping became united with Stedham to form the parish of Stedham with Iping.

In 2000 a young yew tree, grown from the ancient yew in Stedham churchyard (reputed to be over 2000 years old and thus a link with the time of Jesus), after a blessing by the Bishop of Chichester in the cathedral, was planted in Iping churchyard close to the south-west corner of the church to mark the new millennium.

Today Iping church is substantially as it was when rebuilt in 1885. It is a graceful little church built of honey-coloured stone (probably from Fittleworth Quarry). An unusual feature is its very high tower arch. The old memorial tablets on the walls of the nave, and the standard of the stone-masonry throughout, are excellent. With the very fine lime trees at either end of the churchyard, the church greatly embellishes this lovely village.

In May 2017 the parish of Stedham with Iping was incorporated into the Benefice of Milland with Rake, and Linch with Iping Marsh.



### **The Church of St James, Stedham**

A church was built on this site in 1040, but all that remains of the original Saxon building is the base of the tower. The upper portion of the tower was built in 1677. The nave and chancel of the church were re-built in 1850.

The Parish Register dates from 1538 – even older than the peel of 6 bells which dates from 1618, they were re-hung in 2010.

Outside the church, to the right of the porch, is a stone coffin and gravestone probably pre-Saxon. They were found in the old walls during the re-building.

Beside the path in the churchyard stands one of the oldest yew trees in the country. It is 40 feet in circumference and believed to be 2500 years old. It is one of the Sussex trees used to provide cuttings which were grown on and in the year 2000 they were distributed to every parish in the Diocese, giving each one a living link with the time of Christ.

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