

history  
of  
temple church



Built by the Knights Templar

# History of Temple Church

Written 1883  
Fourth edition 1905

This edition with new foreword 2001  
Published by the Temple Association, Abbey Farm, Temple,  
Bodmin, Cornwall PL30 4HW

Printed by Fourway Print, Aston House, Moorland Road, Saltash, Cornwall.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored  
in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form whatsoever, without the prior  
written permission of the publisher.

This book has been published as part of a Local Heritage Initiative  
scheme:



Local Heritage *initiative*



Heritage  
Lottery Fund



Nationwide



The  
Countryside  
Agency

COVER PICTURE:  
STAINED GLASS WINDOW IN TOWER DEPICTING A TEMPLAR KNIGHT

HISTORY  
OF  
TEMPLE CHURCH,  
NEAR BODMIN,  
CORNWALL.

*BUILT BY THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR.*

---

BY  
J. R. BROWN

*Rector of Helland with Temple  
(now Rector of Lyons, Netton le Hole, Durham).*

With Illustrations by the Rev. W. LAGO, Chaplain of the Asylum, Bodmin.

---

*FOURTH EDITION.—PRICE SIXPENCE.*

---

1905.

F. E. SACH, PRINTER, PLYMOUTH.

## Foreword

Used by locals regularly for worship and prayer, visited by hundreds every year, surrounded by rolling moorland, Temple Church is a special place.

As you will discover from this little book, reprinted from an original of the late C19, Temple has an interesting history. In collaboration, the Rev. J.R. Brown (Rector of Helland & Temple) and the Rev. W. Iago (Chaplain of the Asylum, Bodmin) produced the original book to mark the restoration of the church.

It is now more than a hundred years since that restoration and these days it is as much a place of pilgrimage as it was in the days of the Templars. It represents both for locals and visitors a point in their spiritual journey. Every month a service is held in the late afternoon, always 3.30 p.m. GMT (4.30 p.m. BST!). Every day the church is visited if not by humans then by bats, birds and sometimes sheep, if the gate is inadvertently left open. The door is never locked.

Temple is a living church, part of the little settlement of Temple. It was a larger place at one time, now it has 26 souls. We who live nearby love our church and love people

to visit. We are proud of our living church surrounded by a "living churchyard", an attempt to preserve flora and fauna native to the moors.

There is simplicity about the church in its moorland setting, a reminder of the simple origins of Christianity. Especially at Christmastide many have testified to rediscovering this simplicity. Journeying to this remote corner of Bodmin Moor, finding a candlelit place, hearing the singing of carols, one indeed feels that one is entering the Christmas Stable for the first time.

You are, of course, welcome to visit any time - 24 hour opening, 365 days of the year! And animals are welcome. Our average attendance at worship is about 10 humans, 2 dogs and a cat!

So make sure you come and visit this special place and we would love to see you at one our services.

DEREK CARRIVICK  
Priest-in-Charge, Temple

November 2002

## PREFACE.

---

**I**N issuing a reprint of the HISTORY OF TEMPLE CHURCH, it has been thought advisable that the present Vicar should write a few words by way of preface, continuing the History to the present time.

On the resignation of the Rev. J. R. BROWN in 1890, Temple was taken over by his successor, the Rev. R. G. HUTT, but only for a short period, when it was transferred to the Rev. C. OLIVE, Curate in charge of Warleggan, till the year 1893, when the Rev. E. VERNON COLLINS, Rector of Blisland, undertook the duties for the space of two years. At the end of that time, it was again transferred to Warleggan, and the Incumbency was accepted by the Rev. C. E. LAMBERT, who held it till his death in January, 1901.

Mr. LAMBERT'S death, which took place under sad circumstances, will ever be associated with Temple. After officiating at Evensong on Sunday, January 13th, 1901, Mr LAMBERT started to walk home to Warleggan. When he had proceeded only a short distance, he was overcome by some sudden seizure, and fell dead. Although only about half-a-mile from the Church, he was, when he died, on an unfrequented path and hidden from the view of the neighbouring houses; and thus his body remained for three days undiscovered. It is worthy of note that during the whole of that time, his dog, an Irish terrier, remained by his dead master. Mr. LAMBERT was buried in Temple Churchyard, and his grave is marked by a granite Cross.

Since then the parish of Temple has passed with the parish of Bolventor; and the writer of this preface has now served it for over four years.

The last event of interest connected with the parish is the presentation, by Dr. T. G. VAWDREY, a native of the County, of a stained-glass Window for the Tower. This completes the windows of the Tower. Two of them represent St. CATHERINE, and a Knight Templar, respectively; and the subject of the third, agreed upon by Dr. VAWDREY and the VICAR, is "LUKE, the beloved Physician," the choice of this subject being prompted by the tradition that the Knights Templar had a Chapel dedicated to St. LUKE, in the neighbouring parish of Bolventor.

The ancient stones, some having formed part of the old Church and others having been monuments in the Graveyard, are now placed against the Churchyard wall, opposite the South Porch; and amongst them will be found much to interest the archæologist.

In closing this preface, the VICAR must mention that it is largely through the kind help of Dr. T. G. VAWDREY that this reprint has become possible, and that the money arising from its sale will be devoted to the maintenance of the Church.

J. H. DICKINSON,

*Vicar of Temple*

*June, 1905.*





### The Knights Templar.

THE Knights Templar were a religious military Order, founded at Jerusalem in the year 1118. This Order, the first military one in the world, was formed on the instigation of Hugh de Pagans and Godfrey de St Homer, who, with several other pious and noble men, offered their services to Baldwin King of Jerusalem, to defend all persons, pilgrims and strangers, travelling thither to the Holy Sepulchre, from robbery and violence.

Their vows were chastity, obedience, and poverty, and at first these were strictly carried out. They professed to observe the rules of St. Augustine, and were so poor that they represented themselves as having only one horse to carry two or three knights, and their seal was "two men on one horse." Baldwin bestowed on them an apartment in his Palace, adjacent to the holy Temple; hence they were called "Knights Templar." Afterwards, the Canons of the Temple gave them a piece of ground on which to build; and the King, Lords, and Prelates gave them moneys out of their own revenues. Their rules now stated that they were to guard the highway against robbers, to hear the Holy Office every day, or, if prevented so doing by their military duties, to say a certain number of Pater-nosters instead. They were to abstain from flesh four days a week, and on Friday from eggs and milk meats. Each knight should have *three* horses and one esquire, but should neither hunt nor fowl. The dress prescribed for them by Pope Honourius, who confirmed their Order, was plain white, to which Eugenius III. added a red Cross on the breast.

In a short time, they increased to 300 knights, besides a considerable number of brethren. They seem



to have gained very early settlements in England, as in other kingdoms, their Churches being in every case exempted from the jurisdiction of Prelates not of their Order; as proved by the Church at Temple, which anciently was never visited by the Bishop of the Diocese or his subordinate officials. It is said that in the course of years the gallant knights established preceptories in desert and uncultivated places, with the view of introducing inhabitants, or of civilizing the few scattered over the wilderness. Whether this was the case at Temple, or whether it was - as local tradition states - originally a resting place for bands of Crusaders, we cannot tell now.

In the year 1218, the Order of Knights Templar was confirmed at the Council of Troyes, and subject to a rule of discipline drawn up by St Bernard. In every nation (for they soon spread all over Europe) the Order had a particular Governor, called "Master of the Temple." Their Grand Master had his residence in Paris. As time went on, the vow of poverty became a thing of the past. The Order accumulated vast riches, and the knights became men of military renown.

The part they took in the wars of the Crusades is well known, and great numbers of them fell fighting for the cause. Nineteen years after the Crusades the whole Order was suppressed through the machinations of the vindictive Philip IV. of France, the enemy of the Church, through whose instrumentality, in 1307, a series of charges was brought against the Knights by two members of their Order, who had been degraded for their crimes and who were then in prison for their offences. The Knights were accused of having sold Crusaders in the Holy War into the hands of the Turks, of sacrificing human beings to an idol they worshipped, of spitting upon the Cross of Christ, of worshipping a cat, or a wooden head crowned with gold, and of unnatural crimes. Doubtless among many of them vices had multiplied: many were proud, haughty and vicious; arrogance, luxury, and cruelty existed. But

the real cause of their ruin lay in the foul act of Philip the Fair, King of France, who coveted their rich lands, and of Pope Clement V., who had long sojourned in France and wished to do a favour to the King, — their great wealth was the real cause. As a quaint old historian says, "The King could not get the honey without he burnt the bees." It was also partly the result of hatred against their Grand Master at Paris, who had offended Philip in several matters; and also in the action taken by the Order in his quarrel with Pope Boniface VIII. In this the Knights Templar had taken the Pope's side against the King, and had furnished him with money to carry on the war. Philip asked the Pope that all the lands of the Knights Templar in France might be forfeited "by reason of their horrible heresies and licentious lives," and all put in prison and their lands given to his youngest son. But he was terribly disappointed, for the Council of Vienne ordered all their lands to be given to the Knights Hospitaller. The cruel order was carried out: the whole body was suppressed, the Knights were cast into prison, they were put on the rack, they were burned at the stake. They solemnly avowed their innocence while languishing under the severest tortures, and even with their dying breath denied the crimes with which they were charged. But nothing saved them. A Knight Templar burned at Bordeaux, on his way to the stake, saw the Pope and the King looking secretly from a window, and loudly denounced them for their treachery and cruelty. Edward II. of England was reluctantly drawn into the persecution, and in 1308 an inquisition was made of all the possessions of the fraternity in England, both in lands and goods. The result of this inquisition is preserved in what are called the Templars' Rolls (2 & 3 Edward II.) in the Public Record Office. These Rolls enter into very minute details, showing even the number of poultry on each estate.

Though the Kings both of France and England seized all the property of the Knights and kept the movable goods, it was found they could not retain the

landed possessions of the Order, which in England and France were transferred to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, or Hospitalers. Great difficulties were found, however, in getting possession. In many cases the lords of the fees had seized the estates, and it was only by process of law they could be recovered; and even as late as 1338 some of the most valuable of the Templars' manors had not been surrendered.

Before the last mentioned date, they possessed the preceptory and manor of Trebighe in Cornwall, as appears from an extent of their lands preserved in the Public Library at Malta. The manors of Trebighe and Temple seem from this time to have gone together. We find when the Order of Knights Hospitaler was suppressed, their lands were transferred to the King (Henry VIII.). Then we have an interesting lease by Edward VI. Philip and Mary, however, upon consultation with Cardinal Pole, decided to restore the Order of Knights Hospitaler, and did so; but Queen Elizabeth again dissolved them and seized all their lands. After several interesting changes in ownership, which are detailed in Sir John Maclean's admirable work on Trigg Minor (to which this pamphlet is largely indebted) the manors of Trebighe and Temple passed into the Wrey family.

Since 1632, Temple Church, once the resting-place and home of the ancient Knights Templar, the warriors of the Crusades, has been in the gift and has pertained to the baronetcy of the Wrey family.

