

**A POPULAR AND  
ILLUSTRATED GUIDE  
TO ST. PETER'S  
CHURCH, DORCHESTER**

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A popular and illustrated guide to St. Peter's Church, Dorchester by A. Metcalfe

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**A. METCALFE**

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Photo by |

INTERIOR OF ST. PETER'S, CHANCEL

| Weeks & Gimblett, Weymouth

A POPULAR AND  
ILLUSTRATED GUIDE  
TO  
ST. PETER'S CHURCH  
DORCHESTER

BY THE  
REV. A. METCALFE  
Rector  
AND CHAPLAIN OF H.M. PRISON, DORCHESTER

Dorchester  
F. G. LONGMAN, 4 CORNHILL  
H. LING, 23 HIGH EAST STREET  
AND FROM THE AUTHOR \* \* 1907

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## P R E F A C E

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THIS does not profess to be a history of St. Peter's Church, but, as the reader will observe from the title-page, a "Guide to St. Peter's Church."

The fact is, it is impossible to write a history of events and circumstances in centuries gone by when there are only a few records left behind.

If, when the present church was built, in the early part of the fifteenth century, there had been "parish magazines" and "County Chronicles," as there are now, we might have been able to give as good an account of the erection of the church and its opening ceremonies as we have done now of its restoration and reopening services in the twentieth century.

But still, there is a great deal of what is most interesting to say of an ancient church, even from inference and implication.

I have consulted every available source of information, and the facts which I have been able to collect in connection with our ancient fane I have weaved into, what I trust will prove to be, a truly popular guide, pure and simple, to St. Peter's Church.

I am much indebted to the Dorset County Museum Library for valuable information, and also to Mr. Harry Pouncy, Assistant Secretary of the Dorset Field Club, for his kind help in correcting the proof-sheets.

The "Guide" has been completed little by little, in spare moments of recreation snatched from a busy life; and therefore in offering it to the public I trust that their criticisms will be merciful and charitable.

Faithfully yours,  
A. METCALFE.

ST. PETER'S RECTORY,  
DORCHESTER,  
*May 1907.*





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## ILLUSTRATED GUIDE

TO

# St. Peter's Church, Dorchester

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### St. Peter's Parish

ST. PETER'S is the largest and the central parish of the town of Dorchester. It contains the principal buildings of the county town, *e.g.* the Post Office, the Guild Hall, the Corn Exchange, the Market House, the four Banks, the Grammar School, the County Technical School, the County Museum, the Wesleyan Chapel, the Congregational Chapel, Chubb's Almshouse and Napier's Almshouse, one of the principal hotels—the Antelope, the County Club, the Conservative Club, the Ladies' Club, and the best shops in the town.

St. Peter's parish is cruciform in shape, including all South Street (the chief thoroughfare of the town), North Square, part of High East Street and part of West Street; and at the cross roads, where North, South, East, and West Streets meet, stands "the chief object of interest in the place, and certainly its most conspicuous ornament—St. Peter's Church."

### St. Peter's Church

In Dorchester the churches are of very ancient foundation, and as old as the introduction of Christianity into the kingdom of the West Saxons, for we are told by William of Malmesbury that in A.D. 634, Kynegils, king of the West Saxons, having embraced the Christian religion, gave St. Birinus the town of Dorchester, there to settle his episcopal see; where, having built and consecrated churches, and by his labours called many people to the