

BODMIN OLD CORNWALL SOCIETY

BERRY TOWER, BODMIN

BERRY TOWER (original spelling)
Situated in the old cemetery on the northern side of Cross Lane was built between 1501 and 1514 and is all that remains of the Chantry Chapel of the Holy Rood or Cross used by the New, Holy Rood and St. Christopher Guilds up to the Reformation there. In 1470 there were three Guild Chapels on the Hill.

The largest was the Chapel of the Holy Rood Guild with its own burial ground. There are no records dating the building of the Chapel but documents for the building of the tower still exist. The presence of a burial ground at a Guild Chapel is rare and reflects on the early monastic origins of the site. Today only the tower remains, but in the 19th century foundation walls of the Chapel of the Holy Rood were traceable.

It is also very likely that this area was the site of the monastery of Dinuurin, seat of the Cornish bishops in the 9th century AD, having been originally dedicated to St Guron and later replaced by St Petroc.

Berry Lane leading to Clerkenwater was one of two settlements founded by St

Petroc in the 14th century and it is probable that Bodmin was once centred upon this Northern Hill and a probable Saxon derivation favours "Borough" as a meaning for "Bury" and "Bery".

It is also recorded that baptisms took place at the Chapel of the Holy Rood but by 1690 it was no longer being used. The graveyard was used for grazing and by 1753 only the Tower remained. In 1859 the land was purchased for a new town cemetery as the St Petroc burial ground was full.

In the early 1990's the Tower's future was uncertain and faced demolition but in 1994 the entire cemetery area was designated as a Conservation Area. The Tower was fenced off but was later repaired and restored after funding was granted from the Heritage Lottery Fund, North Cornwall District Council and Bodmin Town Council.

A Celtic Cross, once positioned in Berry Lane, now stands nearby.

An entry in the Bodmin Deanery Magazine for March 1925 reports on the Re-Consecration of the Burial Ground at Berry Tower by the Bishop of Truro and the Archdeacon of Bodmin

Sources: Pat Munn, *The Cornish Capital*.
John Neale, *Around Bodmin*.
Peter Davies, *Bodmin Town & Moor*.
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