



THE CHURCH OF LISTERBY



THE PARISH OF LISTERBY

In the 12th century a Roman greystone church was built in the village of Listerby in the south of the large parish which had the same name and which was divided into the parishes of Tving, Hjortsberga, Edestad and Listerby during the next century. Probably this church then replaced a wooden stave church from the Missioning time - it was in Korsanäs within the parish that Bishop Egino of Dalby (in Scania) is said to have debarked to begin his deed, the christening of the province of Blekinge. The large village on the ridge of Listerby has early been a regional centre in the area but the parish has also had other significant villages as Kuggeboda and Yxnarum. The neighbouring parish of Förkäråla became an annexe congregation of Listerby. At the island of Torkö a monastery of Grey Friars was founded in the 1460's, that ceased to exist already seventy years later at the Reformation.

THE CHURCH BUILDINGS

The stone church had no belfry but had a nave and a chancel with an apse and probably a porch, too. The sacristy was built in 1738. Today only the north wall in the chancel, in the eastern part of the nave and in the sacristy and perhaps the apse remains. In 1847-1849 the present church building was built after sketches made by the surveyor in Ronneby O E Ödman. This building was also built of greystone with an extended and widened nave and an extended chancel. There was still no belfry and the bells were hanging as earlier in a separate bell tower south of the church. At first in 1871 a belfry was built after sketches by the architect J A E Hawerman.



THE CHANCEL AND THE ALTAR DECORATION

The request by the erection of the church in the 1840's was to have a building in the so called barn-style that was popular at the time. That is a spacious semi-cylindrical vault in the church hall preferably without a marked chancel. While the sacristy and parts of the northern wall were preserved, the chancel became both narrower and lower than the nave. In the apse a big semi-cylindrical window was made and on the altar in front of this window a big gold-plated wooden cross with a sculptured winding sheet was placed - at that time this was not an unusual altar decoration. At a renovation of the church in 1950 the cross was moved to its current place on the south wall and in the apse the artist Gunnar Torhamn painted the big picture showing the Resurrection of Jesus, that now dominates the impression of the church.



FROM THE OLD CHURCH

some furnishings come, among these the pulpit from around 1600. In the old days it has had its place in the south-west corner of the nave between the chancel arch and a window that gave the priest light for reading. The moving of the pulpit took place in connection with the construction of the church when it was placed in the corresponding corner on the northern side and a gangway through the wall was made into the sacristy. The little pulpit has several times been "improved". It was painted in 1693 at the same time as the canopy and the down-hanging dove was renovated. Then a lengthening beneath was built looking like a wooden curtain. By the moving of the pulpit, the canopy was excluded but it is now in place again and in about 1950 the artist Gunnar Torhamn made the reliefs of the Evangelists that nowadays are decorating the panels.



TWO FRONTAGES

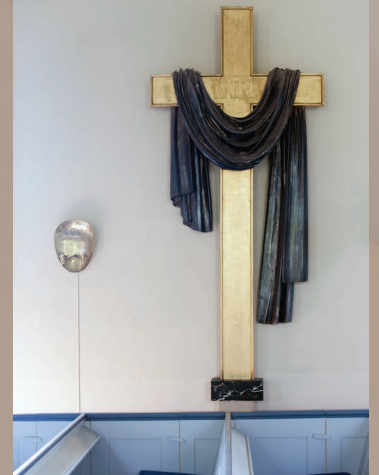
The church of Listerby gives you an almost more magnificent impression seen from the chancel towards the exit than when you see the interior from the pews, mostly through the strange parapet of the organ gallery. It was the gallery frontage even in the old church, that was narrower and the back positive of the organ now fills out the middle part. The parapet is divided by pilasters into twelve fields where the apostles are depicted in small, rather talented paintings, except for Judas to the far right. In his place there is only a table with thirty silver coins. This work was made in 1700 and the master's name was Jöns Åkesson Wulf. Behind the parapet the organ front in white and gold from quite another time is rising. It was constructed in 1882 by the architect Grundström for the first Åkerman-organ in this church.



THE SACRISTY

is today, apart from some rests of walls, the oldest part of the church, erected of greystone in 1738. The year is specified on a weather vane of iron that now is kept in the small chamber in the tower. The beautiful room of the sacristy is dominated by a flat wooden ceiling that was built from below and painted in a blue shade decorated with the Christ figure and Acanthus windings along the sides. The ceiling is as old as the sacristy and received its painting in 1740. In an inscription we can read "The Vicar Bengt Gunerus and the church warden Pål Danielsson have let build this sacristy to the honour of God". The Vicar Gunerus was responsible for the building of a similar, partly preserved ceiling in the nearby situated church of Föckärla.

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 TRANSLATION: Ann-Margret Olofsson



SHORT FACTS

Building time: 1849

Sacristy: 1738, Medieval rests

Building style: Neoclassical

Material: Greystone, some brick, plastered

Architect: O E Ödman

Organ: Johannes Künkel, Lund 1985, 18 Stops

Bells: 1704 und 1746, hanging in the belfry

Altar picture: Fresco in the apse by Gunnar Torhamn 1950