



THE CHURCH OF EDESTAD



THE WELL OF EDESTAD

The well that you can see on the northern side of the church, was well-known for its healing strength already in the pagan times. Especially at Midsummer people went there in crowds to sacrifice in order to get cured from illness or to avoid accidents. When the church was to be constructed in the newly Christened region they deliberately built it beside the well to use its attraction in the mission - it was one of the great pilgrimages in southern Scandinavia. The sacrificing of coins and valuable objects, that the ministers of the church then carefully picked up out of the well and the clothes that the cured people ritually left and that were sold, made the church rich. The Well of Edestad kept its power over the minds for a long time after the Reformation.



THE CHURCH AND THE BELFRY

The church of the Christening time had been a so called stave church built of wood. In the middle of the 13th century Edestad then got the new church built of greystone and somewhat brick, that still stands here on the slope beside the well. This church has no belfry. The early Gothic building has a chancel with straight joints and from the beginning it has had a flat wooden ceiling in the nave and an open visible truss in the chancel. During the later Middle Ages the sacristy in the north and (probably) the porch in front of the south portal were added. The chancel got its magnificently painted ceiling in 1730 and in the 1850's the nave was provided with a plastered vault of wood. The belfry on the hill south of the church from the late Middle Ages became a role model in the surroundings.



THE CRUCIFIX

over the triumphal arch, is not the old triumphal crucifix of Edestad, the famous "Cereal God", that was carried in procession around the fields to promote the growth of the year - it is now kept in the Blekinge Museum together with a great number of other Medieval wooden sculptures from the church of Edestad. They were acquired to the church during that time when the church had a great income from the pilgrimage to the well. Another one of these figures and probably a wooden cross belonging to it have been allowed to return here to the church where they belong. The sculpture of Christ that has no feet and arms is a Baltic piece of art from the second part of the 15th century.



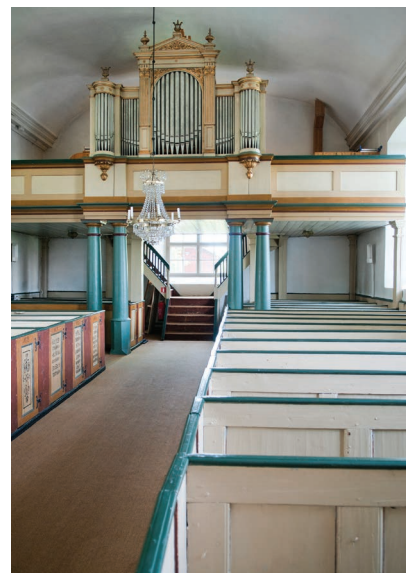
THE CHANCEL

The Medieval altar with its crowd of sculptured wooden figures is gone and the chancel's original open, visible and beautifully made truss is now covered by a painted flat ceiling. The changes of the chancel's interior in the 18th century must have been radical. In order to better keep the warmth a ceiling of the same kind as there then was in the nave was built in the chancel in 1729. The year after it was given a Baroque painting showing Christ with the Victory Banner, Acanthus loops and other things that we still can admire and for which painting the artist Lundberg in 1730 requested 60 silver coins. The Altar in Rococo with the painting of The Crucifying on canvas by I Linnell was put up in 1763 and in the 1850's the "modernizing" was completed by putting up the altar ring with turned dolls.



THE PULPIT

is mentioned in the inventory of the year of 1665 as new and "very ornated and artfully worked". This is no exaggeration; the unknown master has wrought a spectacular piece. The pilasters of the pulpit have separate sculptures of the Evangelists and John the Baptist and the Prophet Jonah and in the fillings pictures from the life of Jesus are embossed. Even more interesting the canopy is with its depiction of the Ultimate Judgment. On top on a bow over a crowd of people Christ sits judging: the good people to his right side where they are allowed to wander towards a shining sun and the bad people to the left who are driven by black devils into the jaws of a beast's head.



PEWS AND GALLERY

The church has a closed system of pews from the 17th century, partly changed. After the Reformation the long sermon became a main element of the service and in the churches the pulpit and pews were new, necessary devices. The original painting of the pews' gables and their data about the owners in old German type have been exposed and restored - the men on the south side and the women on the north side. The gallery in the west part of the church was built in the 18th century but the façade was not built until 1872, when the organ the church then had was moved up on to the gallery from its place at the stairs to the chancel that was said to be inappropriate.

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Picture of a fresco found under a plaster in the porch.

In a niche in the eastern wall the flat white lime plaster has been hiding not only one, but two generations of a fresco, the inner one is probably Medieval. What could there be behind the white walls in the nave and the chancel?



SHORT FACTS

Building time: Around 1250

Building style: Early English

Material: Granite, somewhat brick, finishing mortar

Architekt: -

Organ: Frederiksborgs Orgelbyggeri, Hillerød, Denmark 1950. 12 stops

Bells: 2 bells, 1688 and 1813, hanging in the belfry

Altar Picture: I Limnell 1763