



This stone was discovered by Sir John Powell in 1675 in his orchard in the village of Deerhurst in Gloucestershire. The stone is now on display in Gallery 41, England on floor 2 of the Ashmolean. A copy of the stone is on display in the chapel in Deerhurst which is open to the public.

Visit <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/oddas-chapel/>

DISCOVERY OF STONE INSCRIPTION COMMEMORATING A BROTHERS DEATH SPARKS MYSTERY OF LOST CHAPEL

The Latin inscription on the stone tells us that Earl Odda had a royal hall built in memory of his brother Ælfric. Ælfric died in 1053 and the chapel was consecrated by Bishop Ealdred on the 'second day before Ides of April in the fourteenth year of the reign of Edward, king of the English.' according to the inscription. The king was Edward the Confessor, who reigned from 1042 until his death in 1066. So we know that the consecration took place on April 12th 1056.

Sadly, nobody knew where the chapel was, or if it had survived. Then, about 200 years after the Odda Stone was found another chance discovery by builders pinpointed the site of the 'royal hall'.

The Chapel

Odda's Chapel at Deerhurst is one of the most complete surviving Saxon churches in England. The chapel was built around 1056 by Earl Odda, a relative of Edward the Confessor's. The Odda Stone tells us that Earl Odda had this Royal Hall built and dedicated in honour of the Holy Trinity for the soul of his brother Aelfric who had died a few years earlier. Odda's Chapel is built of local blue lias stone and is quite small with high walls. It measures about 40 feet long and 17 feet high.

For centuries nobody realised that Odda's Chapel had survived. An entry in the chronicles of Tewkesbury Abbey described a church opposite the entrance to Deerhurst Priory and, of course, the inscription on the Odda Stone mentions the hall dedicated to Holy Trinity but the chapel seemed to have disappeared.

Then in 1885 a stone building that had become attached to a 17th Century property was being repaired. Workers discovered an arched window behind the plaster of one wall. As more plaster was taken away the stone walls of the former chapel were finally revealed. The key to proving that it was Odda's Chapel was the discovery of a somewhat damaged inscription within a 16th-century chimneystack. Despite the damage it was possible to make out that it stated: 'This altar has been dedicated in honour of the Holy Trinity'.

Deerhurst has two Anglo-Saxon churches. Sometime in the 7th century a Saxon monastery was founded at Deerhurst and St Mary's was the church associated with the monastery. In about 970 the monastery was refounded as a Benedictine priory and then in 1059 Edward the Confessor gave Deerhurst Priory to St Denis in France. It remained in French ownership until 1443 when it was given to Tewkesbury Abbey. Four monks and an abbot lived at Deerhurst Priory until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1540. After that the priory church became the local parish church and is still in use today.



Interior of the chapel. The replica Odda Stone is displayed beyond the arched doorway.

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Odda's Chapel. The nave had been converted into a kitchen and the chancel used as a bedroom before the chapel was rediscovered. By Nilfanion (Own work) [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons.