



Church of the Holy Cross, Seend / Information portal

The Nave – Cruciform mark / stain



Visitors will notice the curious cruciform mark or stain immediately above the chancel arch. In truth, nobody really knows the story of this extraordinary mark but one theory to account this is that the original rood (carved crucifix) was taken down in the time of Edward VI. In the reign of Queen Mary (Mary Tudor), who endeavoured to restore the authority of the Pope over the Church of England, it may have been thought easier – particularly in view of the somewhat ephemeral nature of doctrinal changes at that time – to paint the crucifix as a temporary measure rather than to have a new one carved. And presumably this painting can have survived no longer than the Act of Uniformity in Queen Elizabeth the first's reign. For many years its remnants were covered by a series of plaques carrying the text of the ten commandments. When these were removed in the 1930's a little colour still remained, but most of it was chiselled off at the time. The outline which can now be seen is the mark of the oil which was used to bring up the colour of the original paint.