

## **Please return the Guide after your visit**

### **All Saints Parish Church, Boyne Hill, Maidenhead GUIDE TO THE CHURCH INTERIOR AND COMPLEX**

*Please start your visit in the middle of the church in front of the Nave Altar and look around you. The first part of the Guide explains a little about the background of All Saints and how it came to be built.*

All Saints, Boyne Hill, is a unique example of the Neo-Gothic Revival in Victorian church building. It came about through several reasons.

The revival of the Gothic style was initiated by the brilliant and controversial architect Augustus Pugin (1812-1852) who related the mediaeval Gothic style of the great Northern European cathedrals to Christian faith and worship. Pugin's genius culminated in the design and workmanship of the Throne in the House of Lords just before he died.

The Oxford Movement, known as the Tractarians, followed John Keble's Assize sermon of July 1833 which protested against Parliament deciding to suppress several Irish Bishoprics rather than the Church making its own decision. Following this Keble, Newman, Pusey and others began to write Tracts in the Times against national Apostasy. Through the Tractarian rediscovery of the holiness of the sacraments, worship and the Priesthood, as well as a strong focus on social responsibility, a spiritual revival led not only to the reform and renewal of the Church of England but an enormous amount of church building both urban and rural.

The Cambridge and Campden Society, also known as the Ecclesiologists, promoted excellence in church building, furnishings, music and liturgy, and encouraged the relationship between the Tractarian theology and Gothic architecture.

The building of All Saints was due to two sisters, the Misses Maria and Emily Hulme, daughters of the Revd. William Hulme, Evangelical founder of Holy Trinity, Reading. Being of Tractarian churchmanship themselves they wished to found not only a church but also a full complement of Parish buildings. They consulted Bishop Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford and third son of William Wilberforce, slavery abolitionist and reformer, and Boyne Hill was chosen as an open rural site deemed to be helpful to Emily's poor health, Boyne Hill being then in the parish of Bray. Charles Pascoe Grenfell of Taplow Court, whose grandson was ennobled as Lord Desborough, gave the land and in 1854 30 year old George Edmund Street was commissioned as architect.

George Edmund Street had been influenced by Pugin and also the Oxford and Cambridge Movements. Street felt that the Gothic style embodied the Christian faith in architecture and design and had been appointed Diocesan Architect by Bishop Wilberforce in 1850. In 1852 Street married Mariovita Procter of Bray who, when she died in 1874, was buried in the churchyard here at All Saints. Street ranks alongside Pugin, Butterfield and Scott as one of the foremost Neo- Gothic architects of the period and his best-known design is of the Law Courts in The Strand. He regarded All Saints as his most important church design, and is a Tractarian church. The estimated cost for the building of All Saints to Street's plans was £5000. In spite of tight finances the plans were able to be executed due to a donation from the family and friends of the Incumbent Elect, Revd. William Gresley, and the substitution of Street's original choice of building material – flint stone – with local brick. This substitution gave Street the perfect opportunity to use his new polychrome techniques of stone, tiles, brick, marble and alabaster that he had developed while travelling in Italy and Spain studying early Christian architecture. The original church and complex were completed in 1857, the tower was built in 1865 and the extension to the west end was built by Street's son, Arthur, in 1907. The church is grade I listed.

*Walk past the Nave Altar and into the Chancel towards the High Altar*

Here you can see excellent examples of Street's work:

- \* The 13<sup>th</sup> Century medieval style stencilled wall designs
- \* The decorative ironwork on the dwarf wall and at the sanctuary railing by James Leaver, a local man whom Street used for much of his church building.
- \* The colourful chancel cradle roof in oak
- \* The choir stalls with carvings of foliage – oak, chestnut, sycamore; check for the carvings on the underside of the seats.
- \* The brasses on the floor – one of the Revd. Gresley and the other of his successor, Canon Drummond, both of whom are buried in the churchyard, as is Revd. Thackeray, the third vicar.
- \* The ornate tiles in the nave and the even more ornate Minton tiles in the Sanctuary.
- \* The polychromatic horizontal lines of brick, alabaster and marble around the walls.
- \* The great East window, designed by Street and executed by John Hardman (1811-1867), a gift of one of the original

benefactors. It depicts the scenes of Christ's passion and crucifixion.

- \* The remaining windows.

- \* The Harrison and Harrison organ.

Street paid great attention to detail and retained high personal responsibility for the perfect unity of all his work, demanding high standards of craftsmanship. He worked with the leading craftsmen of his day here at All Saints including John Hardman, William Wailes, Michael O'Connor, James Leaver and Thomas Earp.

*Walk down to the pulpit*

- \* The pulpit is the work of Thomas Earp. It is made of bath stone and is encircled by a decorated arcade of six spans, the lower portions of which are ornamented with inlaid coloured marble and the upper portions with sculptured roses, lilies and passion flowers. Marigolds again feature in the deep mouldings around the top.

- \* The crucifix above the pulpit was given by the Anderson family in memory of Lieutenant John Walton Bamber who was killed on 1 July 1916 at the Battle of the Somme. A memorial to him is located below and to the left of the crucifix beside the side altar.

- \* The window to the left of the pulpit in the East wall was placed there in for the safe delivery of the parish from second World War. It was designed by Sir Ninian Comper.

- \*The 'green' window was installed in 1897 to commemorate the landing of St. Augustine in England in 597AD.

- \*The device painted in gold hanging over the altar is a pyx, used for reserving the Blessed Sacrament on Maundy Thursdays.

- \* The statue by the pillar is of the Virgin Mary and Jesus.

*Continue down the north side aisle*

- \* Under your feet you will see a pair of iron grills. These are the covers for the original heating system, serviced by a coal-fired boiler outside. Needless to say, we now use a much more modern gas-fired system!

- \*You can also see three metal discs. These were where the original gas lights were fixed.

- \* On the wall there are three ornately carved tableaux in Bath stone, also by Thomas Earp. These are part of the Passion of our Lord (the Stations of the Cross) and there are another three on the south wall of the church. The painted gold figures at intervals are a more modern version of the Stations of the Cross.

*At the end of the aisle go to the centre of the church*

Here you are standing where Street's original church ended.

\* The cradle roof in this part of the church is made from stained deal and is covered in stencilled designs.

\* Over the chancel arch to the front of the church is a fresco painting whose inscription reads: - "To the glory of God and in memory of all his saints in one communion of Love-Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" It is thought G E Street painted this himself. He had had two previous unsuccessful attempts although not of exactly the same design.

\* Above the arches are some roundels. These are further scenes from the original Stations of the Cross, and there are supporting words carved at the top of each pillar underneath.

\* Near the roof the clerestory windows depict angels playing musical instruments.

\* Seven of the windows around the church, which depict scenes from the life and ministry of Christ, were executed by William Wailes and M. O'Connor again to Street's design.

\* Turn around and look up at the great West window. Also by Street and Hardman, it was donated by the parishioners of St. Paul's, Brighton, the previous parish of the first incumbent, Revd. William Gresley, and was originally placed where you are now standing.

*Walk to the font*

\* The font is situated to the rear of the South porch. It is made of Bath stone and is supported on stone and marble columns. The font is encircled with twelve sculptured panels containing symbols of the Holy Spirit and the four Evangelists, the rose, lily and passion flower and the monogram IHS (Jesus, Hominum Salvator - Jesus, Saviour of Mankind).

\* The intricately carved font cover was added in April 1918 and is inscribed to the memory of William Howe Bissley who was killed in the First World War in August 1916, and whose name is also to be found on the war memorial in the north porch. The canopy is of oak, partly gilded, surmounted by a dove and the carved text reads: - "Except a man be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God". It was designed by George Fellowes Prynne.

*Walk up the south Aisle*

You will pass three more metal discs for the gas lights, but no grills for heating on this side.

\* Against the last pillar on your left is a statue of St. Paul. The statue came from our daughter church of St. Paul's which was towards the bottom of High Town Road and now replaced by the dual carriage way.

\* On the right on the window sill is a photograph of a paten, chalice and wine flagon. This silverware was designed by Street and is on loan to the treasury at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, where it can be seen by visitors to the Cathedral.

*Go outside into the quadrangle*

The polychromatic effect of red and black brick and bath stone seen in the church is continued in the buildings around the quadrangle, providing a balanced set of buildings executed to a high standard of craftsmanship. They are grade II\* listed.

\* Facing the arch is the old vicarage. This is now a private dwelling and the current vicarage is in Westmorland Road nearby.

\* Opposite the church is the parish centre, built by Street as a school and in use as such until the 1960's. The school, still a Church of England school linked to All Saints, is now in Boyn Hill Road.

\* The buildings on the other side of the quadrangle were built by Street for the curates who served the church. When there is no curate the two houses are let out to private tenants.

*Go through the arch into Boyn Hill Road.*

\* To your left on the corner with Boyn Hill Avenue is the almshouse, built by Street in 1858 and financed by the Misses Lamotte.

\* To your right is the Calvary outside the west end of the church. The Calvary was erected in 1921 to the memory of those of the parish who died in the 1914-18 War. A board inside the North porch lists their names.

*Now look at the tower*

The tower was added in 1865 at a cost of £2617, again by Street. Originally the tower was detached from the church until it was linked in 1907 by Street's son when the extension to the church was built.

\* The tower is of a distinctive, somewhat continental, design with bold stripes and bands of colour, 80 feet high. The spire is made of Bath stone and is a further 70 feet in height. When first built the tower had a peal of six bells. However, in June 1868 a careless workman who was smoking in the tower caused a fire to break out, burning out the interior of the tower and destroying the bells. The metal was recovered and the bells recast, ready to be rehung by Christmas that same year. Two further bells were added and the first peal was rung out on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1882.

\* The two-dial, chiming clock was added just before All Saints Day 1887 at a cost of £175, the money being raised by public subscription.

\* If you look up inside the base of the tower you can see the hole through which the bells can be raised and lowered.

The tower and spire were extensively repaired and restored in 2008/09 at a cost of over £800,000, funded primarily by English Heritage, with other trust bodies and private benefactors.

In 1857 the churchyard was a small burial ground but in 1875 was extended to its present size. Revd. William Gresley, Canon Arthur Hislop Drummond, and Revd Walter Thackeray, the first three vicars, are buried here as is Street's first wife Mariovita and her father. The churchyard is now closed for burials and is maintained by Windsor and Maidenhead Borough Council.

All Saints is a unique example of early Victorian Neo-Gothic architecture, reflecting the emerging Anglo-Catholic tradition of worship and social responsibility through inspired architecture and excellent craftsmanship.

Thank you for coming to our church and we hope you have enjoyed your visit.

*Revd Jeremy Harris and churchwardens*

11 September 2017

**OTHER GUIDES AVAILABLE**

**Stained-glass windows**

**War memorials**

**Gothic arches**

**The source of the bricks used to build the church**

**See also [www.allsaintsboynehill.org.uk](http://www.allsaintsboynehill.org.uk)**