

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, UXBRIDGE



# ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH HISTORY

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A CONCISE HISTORY OF ST ANDREW'S CHURCH

November 2018

## St Andrew's Church is built

By the 1850's the population of both Hillingdon and Uxbridge was beginning to rise. The parish of St Margaret's Uxbridge had been formed out of the parish of Hillingdon in 1842 but with new housing being built between the two centres the then Vicar of Hillingdon the Rev Richard Croft (1856-69) gained permission to build a new church in the area sometimes referred to as Hillingdon West.



He detailed George Gilbert Scott R.A.

"to draw up plans to build a church without unnecessary ornament but in handsome proportions suitable to its position at the entrance to Uxbridge Town..."

Scott, by this time famous not just for his gothic style churches but also for his designs for Kelham Hall Nottinghamshire (1857), St Pancras Hotel (1865) and the Albert Memorial (1864), produced his plans for St Andrew's and local Uxbridge builder William Fassnidge was employed to construct the Church.

On St Peter's Day, 29th June 1864 the foundation stone was laid at the south end of the chancel arch by the Lord Bishop of London, Archibald Campbell Tait. He returned less than a year later to consecrate and open the Church on the feast of Saints Philip and James on 1st May 1865. The spire was completed the following year and, together with the bells, vestry and organ and other embellishments, the cost of the building was some £12,000.

The tower was completed in 1866 and again was paid for by members of the Ede family. It was apparently built in sections in the Fassnidge yard in the High street and then "assembled on site section by section like a prefabricated house".



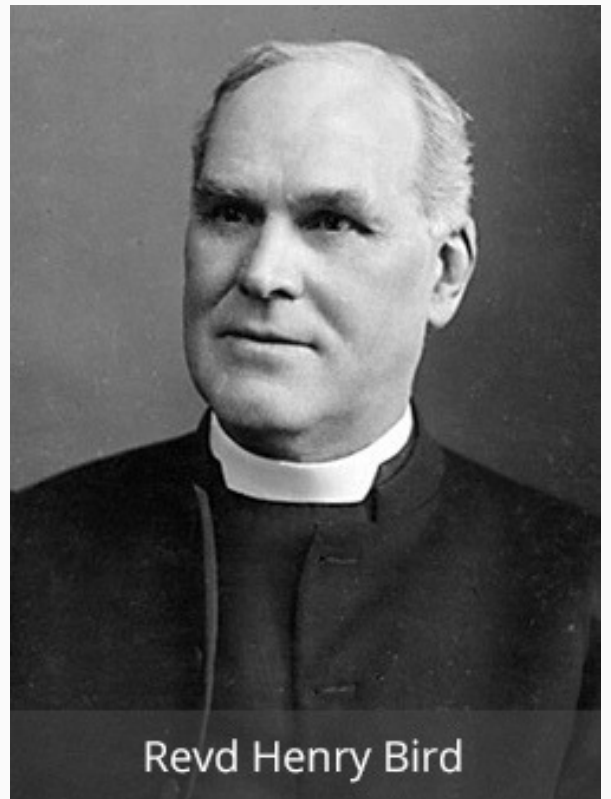
## The Early Years



Revd Charles Mayo

The first vicar was the Rev Charles Theodore Mayo M.A. (1865-1890). Fr. Mayo was a keen bell ringer who eventually paid for the installation of one of the treble bells in the tower. It was in his memory that a new High Altar was erected in 1892. The carved reredos above the Altar is earlier in date. It was given by Miss Ede in 1868 and it represents Jesus and his disciples during the Last Supper. The reredos was designed and produced by the firm of Farmer and Brindley of Westminster Bridge Road.

Our second vicar was Rev Henry George Bird (1891-1913) "who immediately set out to beautify the sanctuary and chancel. About £500, a large sum of money in those days, was spent on mural paintings". These were painted by Alfred Hemmings in 1892. The paintings and lower wall decoration can be clearly seen on the photograph below taken prior to 1927. Notice also the organ in its original position on the south side of the Chancel under the tower and also the pulpit, which despite some texts clearly predated the wooden screen.



Revd Henry Bird

Only three other photographs survive of the early years. The first is of Fr. Bird (we assume) with curate and members of the choir

And the other two form the record of a church day out to Burnham Beeches in 1913

As the same people occur in both photographs our assumption is that both were taken on the same day and that judging by the table and chair on the right of the lower picture the day out included a sit down picnic!

Fr. Bird moved in 1913, the year after his wife died. He was replaced by the Revd Frederick Sutton, who sadly resigned through ill health only two years later.



Revd Henry Bird & The Choir



The Chancel (pre 1927)



Burnham Beeches (1913)



Burnham Beeches Picnic (1913)



The next vicar was the Rev'd G. Herbert Vincent (1915 – 1928). Until recently we had no photographic record of Fr. Vincent and made do with a photograph of Fr Vincent's son, the Rt Rev'd J.D. Vincent, who became the Bishop of Damaraland in South Africa and who visited St Andrew's in the 1950's and was presented with a boxed Communion set in memory of his father. However, we recently discovered this rather faded photograph of Father Vincent sitting on the steps of St Andrew's. Please note the railings to the left of the porch step. From the hinges at the side of these railings it looks as if there was once a gate across this part of the driveway.

It was in 1927 (during Fr. Vincent's time) that the wooden Rood screen designed by William Lathaby, the architect for Westminster Abbey, was erected. The wooden structure was fitted on the top of the low Alabaster screen that had been part of the church since the mid 1870's. As the name suggests the rood screen has at it top a crucifix with Mary, the mother of Jesus and St John standing on either side at the foot of the cross.



## The War Years

The next Vicar of St Andrew's was the tall, thin figure of the Rev'd Arthur Brereton Thompson who arrived in 1928 but who became ill after a year and resigned in 1930.

Fr. Thompson was replaced by the Rev'd Robert Home (1930 – 1952). Fr. Home was a robust but gentle man who watched over the parish during the dark days of the Second World War. On the other side of the road to St Andrew's still stand the remains of RAF Uxbridge, which played a vital during the Battle of Britain. Although primarily a base for training, housing and personnel transfers (Lawrence of Arabia did his initial RAF training here and Douglas Bader convalesced in the Hospital building) the base's main claim to fame was that it served as the operational headquarters of the RAF's number 11 Group under the command of Air Vice Marshal Sir Keith Park.

It was there in the famous and much filmed "Battle of Britain bunker", an underground operations room, that enemy raids were plotted and the squadrons of 11 Group were scrambled to defend London and the south coast.

Less well known is that the base also played a part in the coordinating the Dunkirk evacuation and later as the centre controlling the air operation side of the D-day landings.

In 1954 the resurrection chapel at the front of the north aisle was refurbished in memory of Fr. Home. The reredos was designed by Baden Beadle and manufactured by Faithcraft. The Latin words "Ego sum Resurrectio et vita" which were painted onto the reredos mean "I am the resurrection and the life" and are the words spoken by Jesus in the Gospel of St. John 11.25.

Fr. Home was succeeded by Fr. John Carr who became vicar in the February of 1953. Fr Carr has the distinction of being the longest serving vicar of St Andrew's. During his 27 years many very popular curates were trained and worked in the parish.



Revd John Carr

## The Restoration Appeal

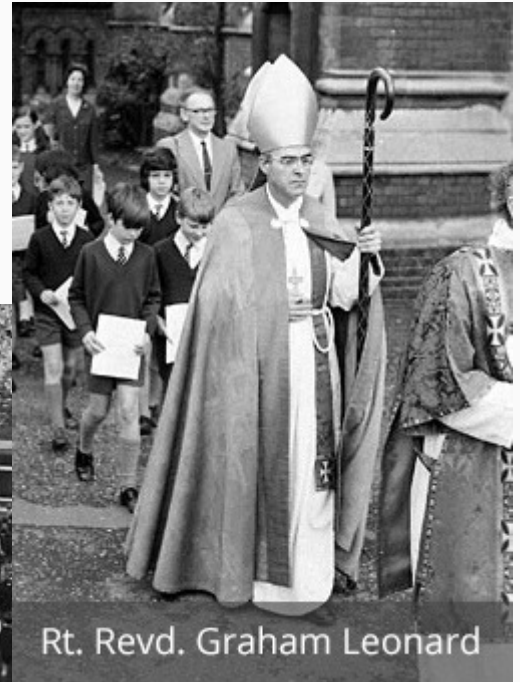
Before Fr. Carr arrived the need to restore the spire had already become obvious. The original wooden shingles of the spire had become unsafe and after an appeal the firm of Gray's of Holborn were brought in and the spire was restored using around 2,000 Canadian cedar wood shingles. However, during the initial work additional problems came to the surface. The architects discovered that there was also rot in the roof, damp in the walls and woodworm in the floor. At the same time the electrical wiring needed renewing. So it was that in 1955 two significant things happened; one was that the tower was struck by lightning and the massive weathervane cockerel on the top of the spire then needed repairing, and second was that Fr Carr then launched a major public appeal to raise funds for the second phase of restoration. The appeal came to a successful conclusion with the church fete on the 28th June 1958.



1955 Restoration Appeal

## The Building of St. Andrew's School

In 1974, during Fr Carr's time the new St Andrew's School building was built at the far end of the Vicarage garden. The Bishop of London, The Rt. Rev'd Graham Leonard led the procession from St Andrew's from the church to the new building which he then opened and blessed.



Rt. Rev'd. Graham Leonard

## Revd Martyn Jarrett (1981 - 1985)



Revd. Martyn Jarrett

After Fr. Carr stood down through ill health the Rev'd Martyn Jarrett (1981- 1985) became the eighth vicar of St Andrew's.

Fr. Martyn oversaw the amalgamation of St John's with St Andrew's and is fondly remembered as a kind and wise man who handled this transition and other delicate issues with great tact and diplomacy. Nine year after leaving us Fr. Martyn became Bishop of Burnley and then in the year 2000 Bishop of Beverley.

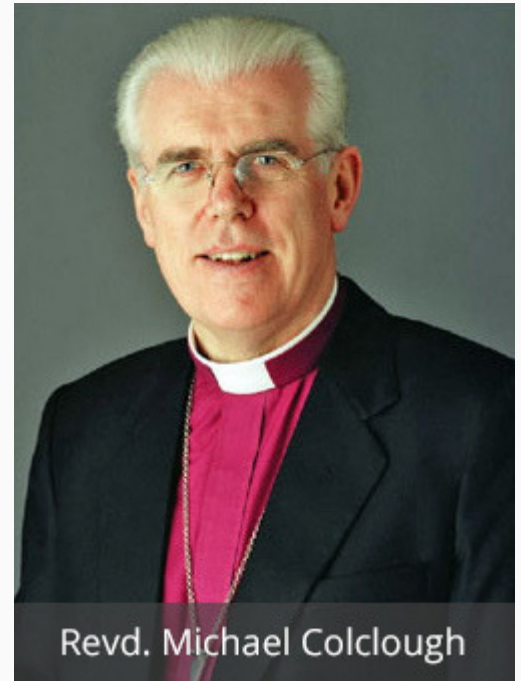


## Revd Michael Colclough (1988 - 1992)

In a move designed to work towards the eventual formation of a single parish in Uxbridge, the next vicar of St Andrew's was the Rev'd Michael Colclough who was at the same time also appointed as the vicar of St Margaret's, the evangelical church in the centre of Uxbridge.

Two years later on the 23rd of March 1988 formal approval was given to the idea that the parishes of St. Andrew's and St Margaret's should join together to create a single parish and that the two churches should henceforth operate as a Team Ministry. The scheme and the team ministry came into effect on April 1st (April Fools' Day) 1988!

At that point Fr Michael became the first Team Rector of the parish of Uxbridge and he stayed in this role until becoming Archdeacon of Northolt in 1992. He was consecrated Area bishop of Kensington in 1996.



Revd. Michael Colclough

## Revd Gordon Steele (1988 - 1994)



Revd. Gordon Steele

At the point of Fr. Michael becoming Team Rector, the Rev'd Gordon Steele (1988-1994) became the first Team Vicar of St Andrews. Fr. Gordon left in 1994 to become vicar of St Alban's Peterborough. After serving as vicar of St John the Baptists Peterborough and honorary canon of Peterborough Cathedral. Fr. Gordon became Archdeacon of Oakham in February 2012.

## Revd Stephen Roberts (1994 - 1998)

The next Team Vicar was the Rev'd Stephen Roberts (1994-1998). Fr. Stephen stayed for four years and then moved just a few hundred yards over the parish boundary to become the Anglican chaplain to Brunel University. He subsequently became the Vice Principal of St Michael's College, Cardiff.



Revd. Stephen Roberts

## Revd Seth Cooper (2000 - 2005)

Following an interregnum of just under two years during which time parish curates looked after St Andrew's, the Rev'd Seth Cooper was appointed as team Vicar in the year 2000. Fr Seth stayed until 2005 when he moved to the Canterbury Diocese to become the vicar of St Mary's and St Saviour's churches in Walmer near Deal.



Revd. Seth Cooper

## Revd Cliff Bowman (2006 - 2017)

In the September of 2006 the Rev'd Cliff Bowman became the next Team Vicar. It was during Fr. Cliff's time at St Andrew's that the hall kitchen and coffee area were reordered and the restoration and retiling of the Church floor was planned and carried out. In 2017 Fr. Cliff retired to Ripon in North Yorkshire.



Revd. Cliff Bowman

## St Andrew's Floor Restoration

After 145 years of constant use the original floor in the church was in a poor state. Many of the old Victorian tiles were worn and cracked, others were lifting off the floor because of problems with the screed underneath. Clearly something had to be done.

After much careful thought and consultation the Church Council decided to embark on a major renewal project. Our church architect, Patrick Crawford B.Arch., M.Phil. R.I.B.A., accompanied by his assistant, Anne Mann, were tasked to obtain the costings, create detailed drawings and plans and then to put together the schedule for the work. The Church Council obtained the necessary faculty from the Diocesan chancellor and permission was received from the bishop to worship in St Andrew's School hall whilst the work was being done.

## March 2010 - The work begins and the builders move in

Our last Sunday in Church was 7th March 2010. Most of the congregation stayed behind after our 10am mass and helped to carry the smaller items into one of the rooms in the church hall whilst another team carried the pews up into the Chancel and into the Holy Spirit chapel.

Having emptied the Church, the team from William Fullers and Sons led by Sean Bulger moved in to start work. The old Victorian tiles were carefully taken up. Most were not in good condition but those that were quickly became desirable antiques – pieces of our history. Most were bought up.

A new concrete base was then put down. When this had set, the tiler arrived to begin the painstaking task of exactly recreating the original Gilbert Scott pattern, but this time using tiles from France.





The old floor tiles are removed



The builders' yard outside the church



The concrete base is removed



Relaying the tiles

## Worship continues and we get a new floor



The School Hall



Worship at St. Andrew's School Hall



While the work was taking place in our building, the family of the church met every Sunday morning in the hall of St Andrew's School.

We were overwhelmed by the warm-hearted welcome and support of the head teacher, Mrs. Wakling, and of the site manager Mr Gerry McGuire. Many of the congregation had attended St Andrew's School when they were younger, so it was a curious experience for them to go back to school!

In practical terms we were a model of efficiency. The school has its own altar and lectern but everything else was transported on what was affectionately known as the 'Holy Trolley'.

One of the highlights of the week was watching Fr. Cliff wheel the holy trolley from the Vicarage every Sunday morning for the 8am mass and then wheel it back after the 10am mass had finished. Needless to say each trolley wheel had a mind of its own and with the school driveway being bumpy one of the games was to guess how many things would fall off before it reached the Vicarage.

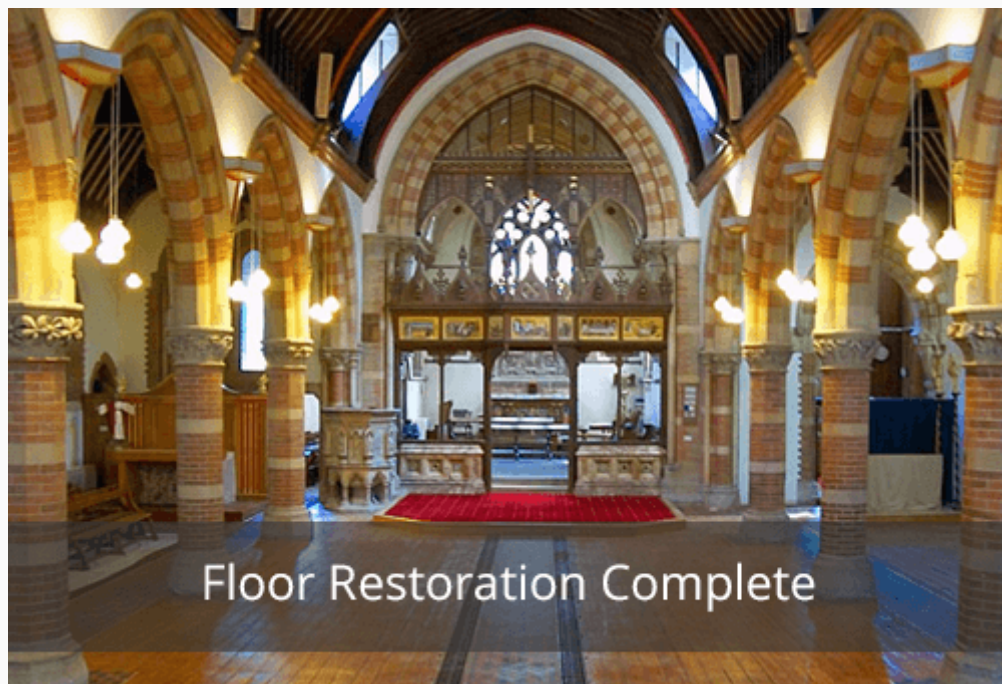
On Sunday 27th June 2010 we were back in Church, which was superb timing because not only were we hosting the combined parish Baptism and Confirmation service that evening ... but also the Willesden Episcopal area ordination of priests the following Saturday morning.



The Holy Trolley



The New Floor





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