



ALL SOULS' CHURCH

BOLTON, LANCASHIRE





THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION
TRUST WELCOMES YOU TO
ALL SOULS' CHURCH
BOLTON, LANCASHIRE

Many years ago Christians built and set upon this place for prayer. They made their church beautiful with their skill and craftsmanship. Now they have met for worship, for children to be baptised, for couples to be married and for the dead to be brought for burial. If you have time, enjoy the history, the peace and the bellows here. Please use the prayer card and, if you like it, you are welcome to take a folded copy with you.

Although services are no longer regularly held here, this church remains consecrated, inspiring, teaching and restoring through its beauty and atmosphere. It is one of more than 300 churches throughout England cared for by The Churches Conservation Trust. The Trust was created in 1969 and was, until 1999, known as the Redundant Churches Fund. Its principal aim is to ensure that all these churches are kept in repair and used, for, in the interests of the Church and Nation, for present and future generations.

Please help us to care for this church. There is a box for donations or, if you prefer to send a gift, it will be gratefully received by the Trust's headquarters at 69 Fleet Street, London EC4A 3DF (Registered Charity No. 258042).

We hope that you will enjoy your visit and be encouraged to visit our other churches. Some are in towns, some in remote country districts. Some are busy and others hard to find but all are worth the effort.

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CHURCH**

5 miles E of Warrington (01564)

ALL SOULS' CHURCH

BOLTON, LANCASHIRE

By ANASTAS PALEY

INTRODUCTION

All Souls' church lies within the former township of Little Bolton which itself contained the northern half of the ancient parish of Bolton-le-Wishers. Little Bolton is first referred to in 1112 (the name comes from the Old English *bol* meaning a dwelling or house and *ton*, a town or village) and is founded by the River Great and the small brooks of Tonge and Anley. At the height of the Industrial Revolution in the late 18th and 19th centuries it grew rapidly northwards from Bolton parish church. Much of Little Bolton was included in the new borough of Bolton, created in 1838, although in the early 19th century it did have its own town hall which now houses the local history museum.

Two brothers, Nathaniel and Thomas Greenhalgh, who lived at Thorsfield, Skipton, on the northern edge of Bolton, had made a large fortune in the cotton spinning industry. For some members of the evangelist wing of the Church of England, they were determined that their wealth should go towards improving the spiritual and moral welfare of the people living in the industrial sprawl around Bolton. They decided to build a school and church on land they owned off the Blackburn road. Nathaniel died in 1877 aged 60 and Thomas decided to proceed with the scheme in memory of his brother.

Work started on the schools in 1877 at a cost of 27,000. The following year the practice of Paley and Austin, architects, was appointed and the foundations of the new church were laid.

PALEY AND AUSTIN

Paley and Austin have been described by the architectural historian Nicholas Pevsner as 'the best firm of Godolms in the north of England'. Edward Graham Paley was born in 1833, son of the sector of Easingwold, Yorkshire and grandson of William Paley. An adherent of Catholicism and a member of *Evidence of Christianity*. He was ordained in 1861 and in 1868 became a parson of, Edward Sharpe, who was finally established there his home in

Lancaster as a successful architect of churches, houses, industrial buildings and railway stations. In 1854 George retired from architecture, in 1858 Paley took over the firm (James Austin was his partner, whom he usually cited as 'having no partner'). Austin was born in Bellingham Hall near Haslemere in Surrey in 1811, son of the local rector. Having qualified as an architect, he joined Sir George Gilbert Scott's practice in London in 1834, designing at least one church (Christ Church, Ashford, Kent) and churches helping with many others. He was also a deeply religious man. At a time when many new churches were being built in the expanding industrial conurbations of northern England the firm was well placed to get contracts to design them. Their reputation grew rapidly and the practice expanded accordingly. Henry Paley (Paley's son) joined in 1866, F.C. Paley himself died in 1891 and Austin in 1915. The firm itself, after 1891 known as Austin and Paley continued until 1944, shortly before Henry Paley's death in 1946.

All Souls' was not Paley and Austin's only church in the area. F.C. Paley had worked in Peter's Parish Church, Bolton in 1867-71; Paley and Austin were also design to Thomas, Deborah Street, Hallowell and The Vicarage in Beane Road in 1860-65. The last was regarded as the main church to All Souls', being of similar design and scale. Sadly it was demolished in 1975.

HISTORY

Building of the church began in 1870 without ceremony. Thomas Greenhalgh did not want the pomp of an official foundation stone. The contractors were Cothingley and Hospital of Manchester and the total cost was £20,000. When the district was constituted a separate parish in November 1879 the population was about 4,500 but during the next few years it was to grow rapidly. The new church, the dedication of which to All Souls' was Thomas Greenhalgh's choice, was consecrated by Bishop Fraser of Manchester on 30 June 1881 and the first incumbent was the Reverend William Popplewell (vicar from 1879 to 1925). Annual services and celebrations were instituted in the church's early years and continued for a time after World War II. In 1921 the Parochial Church Council resolved to shorten church services by avoiding long hymns, psalms and sermons.

The church was originally lit by 12 gas pendant. In 1928 electric lighting was introduced and the organ powered electrically at the same time. The lighting was renewed in 1962.

The Jubilee celebrations in 1973 included a fund-raising campaign to raise money for repairs to the church, the organ and school. While congratulating remarks as to the church's future were made by visiting dignitaries at



View of nave during reconstruction work

the ceremony in 1981, it was becoming obvious that major problems lay ahead. The old school buildings immediately east of the church and designed by local architect JJ Bealhouse had been sold. The church itself had, from the 1940s, suffered several outbreaks of dry rot and vandalism was rife. The small congregation was unable to meet the parish's financial commitments. In 1986 it was noted that over 90% of the local population were of Asian origin, the majority being Muslims. Closure was inevitable, the last service being held on 20 December 1986. It was decided that the church should not suffer the same fate as The Vicarage, so in June 1987 it was vested in the Redundant Churches Fund (now The Churches Conservation Trust). Since then the Trust has undertaken major repairs to the fabric, making it weather-tight, re-laying the city rat and repairing the brickwork. It remains a major landmark in the area, the view of it towering majestically over the rooftops as one approaches from the north is not easily forgotten.

DESCRIPTION

Thomas Greenhalgh's remit to Paley and Austin was to design a church without obstructions, where everyone could see and hear and in which there would be no uncomfortable draughts to send people away with cold. The result is a large window nave spanning 218.116m and 966.02m (28 m) long. The chancel, with its polygonal apse, measures 49 x 25 ft (12 x 8.6 m); north and south of it are aisles or transepts housing the organ and vestries respectively. There is a north porch and a west door. A small irregular tower rises above the north chapel and organ chamber, but does not touch anything in the magnificent west tower 268.02m square and 117.62m high. It



Font, before 1888

CONTEMPORARY ART SOCIETY



Choir stall, originally in north aisle

CONTEMPORARY ART SOCIETY

formerly carried a weather vane bearing the date 1888, which was blown off during a storm in 1911 and not replaced. The church is built of locally made red brick, with Longbridge stone being used for the exterior dressings and fourteen stone inside. The roofs are covered with Westmorland slates.

The interior immediately gives a sense of height and spaciousness. The reredos and is of pitch pine. The large and high decorated aisle windows of the side walls let in plenty of light. The parcelling of the nave walls is of pitch pine, as are the pews which can accommodate 500 persons. The pulpit, choir stalls, altar and communion table, lectern, reading desk and organ screen (all designed by Paley and Austin) are of oak. The screen of Mansfield stone and designed by John Riddle of Birmingham, comprises a series of panels containing the Apostles' Creed, Decalogue and Lord's Prayer. Near the west door is the large font, also of Mansfield stone and also by John Riddle. The oak font cover, paid for by public subscription in 1908, is dedicated to the church's first vicar, William Poppitwell.

The screen in the chancel behind the choir stalls was installed in 1908 and a small side chapel in the north aisle was created in memory of those who died during the second World War.

The chancel is paved with white marble and West black marble. The nave floor slabs are paved in stone flags. The area below the tower is paved with black and white tiles, given by D. Sturworth in memory of his wife Ruth in 1994.

The organ is a five instrument built by Gibson of Leeds in 1886, from a specification prepared by C.W. Pelling of Bolton. Electric blowers were added in 1928, extensive overhauls were carried out in 1979 and in the 1990s by Peter Wood of Huddersfield. The case, designed by Peabey and Austin, is of Danish oak.

The tower contains a ring of eight bells by J. Taylor of Loughborough, 1865. The tower weighs over 21 tons (21800kg), the whole ring weighing 80 tons (80700kg).

STAINED GLASS

The eastern windows of the chancel are all by Clayton and Bell and date from the building of the church. They were given in memory of Nathaniel Greenhalgh and show scenes from the New Testament including several from The Acts of the Apostles, each with the relevant quotation below. The quoted passages are:

left-hand light

They laid they their hands on them; They received the Word with gladness of mind; They were all filled with the Holy Ghost; Believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

centre light

He said unto him, Follow Me; They saw which were many are baptised; Today must abide in thy house; Behold an house in which there is no guile; What God hath cleansed will not thou common; Perceive that God is no respecter of persons; He received eight hundred; Whom ye ignorantly worship him I declare unto you.

right-hand light

He shook off the brass and fell on his face; I appeal unto Caesar; Paul said with a loud voice Stand upright on thy feet; Many which used custom are brought their books and burned them.

The south chancel window, depicting Faith and Hope (female figures with a cross and anchor) and north chancel window showing King David with



East window (of All Saints) centre light showing scenes from the parallel professions of Peter (Bible) Commission in the morning ministry of England

low angles were both inserted in 1897 in thanksgiving of the Greenhalgh brothers' contribution to the church.

The west tower formerly contained a series of scenes of the six days of the Creation, by Stigley and Hunt. This was heavily vandalised and removed in the 1970s, being replaced by plain glass with a cross in the upper portion of the central light. A few pieces of the original glass may still be seen in the top lights. Either side of the tower is a wheel window containing patterns in stained glass.

MONUMENTS

There are a number of monuments on the walls of the church, including one to Thomas Greenhalgh (d. 1897) on the north wall near the west end. The marble tablet records his benefactions of £1500 for clothing and coal for the poor of the parish, £150 for insurance, repairs and repairs of the church and school and £100 for hats and coats for the little singers at the annual services. An alabaster tablet on the south wall records the church's first vicar, William Popplewell, d. 1828 and his wife Martha (d. 1928). In the centre of the north nave wall is a large oak war memorial to three warriors, erected in 1920. It contains the names of 40 people who died, and 190 others who served in the Forces during the First World War.

The Register data from 1879 and are now kept in the Manchester Record Office.

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above: The altar range with Holy & Austin and Central tower (1842-1848).
 From above: Eastern transept (east-west) (c. 1840-1842);
 West tower; Interior looking east (c. 1840-1842).

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