



GUIDE BOOK



A New History of Holy Trinity, Prestwood

I am delighted that we have a new guidebook for our church, which Anne Holmes has expertly researched and produced. The whole church and parish community owes Anne a debt of gratitude for the many hours of research and writing that she has put in to creating this updated guide. I have greatly enjoyed sharing part of this journey with Anne, as she shared with me all kinds of fascinating pieces of information—not least extracts from Disraeli's diaries where he notes down who he met and what he thought of them on his visits to Prestwood. My predecessor, the first Vicar, does not come off well!

Anne has extended Desmond Keen's original guidebook in two important ways.

Firstly, she has provided context around our history that sheds light on our purpose and the history of our mission to the people of Prestwood and Great Kingshill.

Secondly, she has brought our history up to date, by including the 2015 reordering. Capturing this was the genesis for this updated guide. Just as when our church was founded in 1849, the work of 2015 was driven by our sense of purpose and mission, to build the Kingdom of God in this time and this place.

In this guide we learn about why things are as they are. As Christians, we are compelled to go out into the world, using this wonderful building as our base, to make known to the world what it could be. We are grateful to Anne for reminding us so expertly of how this building became what it is. That knowledge spurs us on as we shape its future in the building of God's Kingdom.

*The Reverend Deiniol Heywood, BA, MPhil, AKC
Rector of Prestwood and Great Hampden, 2022*

Preface

In this new guide the hope is to bring not only the history of Holy Trinity in to the 21st century but also to add some further insights into this historic church throughout its long history.

For the architectural and earliest history of Holy Trinity I have borrowed heavily from the two previous guides written by local historian Desmond Keen (1976 and 1997), sometimes word for word. The rest is new.

Anne Holmes BA, MSc
2022

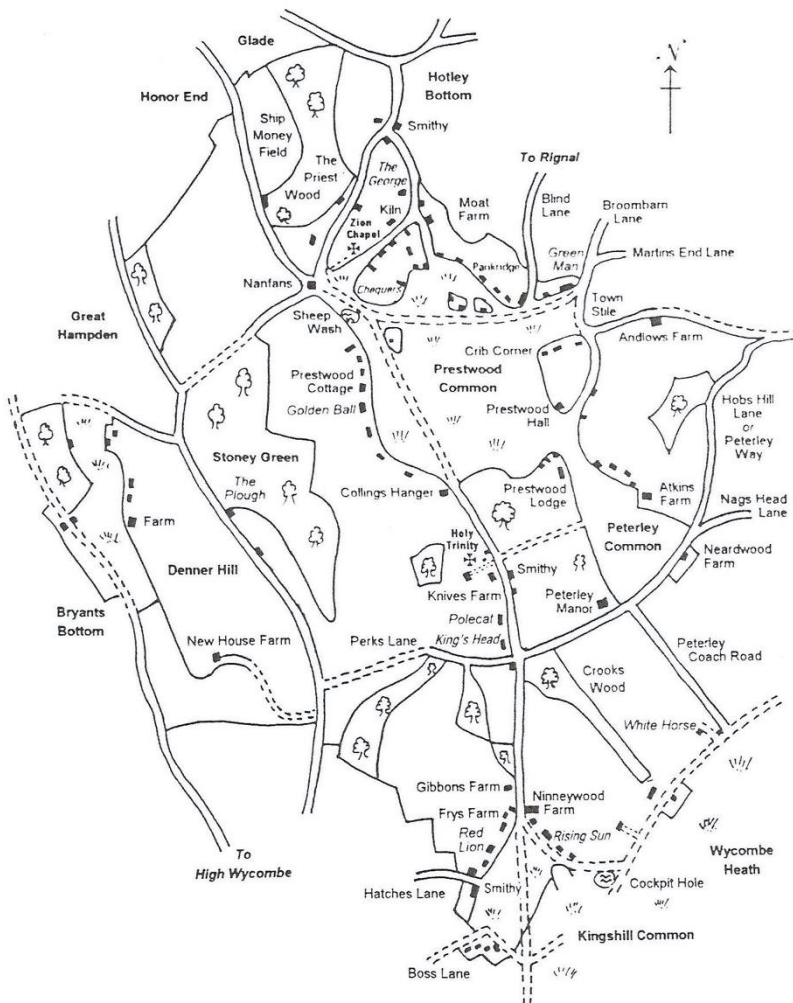
Introduction

The ecclesiastical parish of Prestwood, as it is known today, was not created until 1852 despite Holy Trinity Church having been consecrated in 1849. Prestwood 'village' in the mid-nineteenth century was a collection of scattered hamlets belonging to three separate parishes - Great Missenden, Hughenden and Stoke Mandeville. Great Missenden parish covered the largest part of Prestwood, Hughenden was the parish in which the new church was built and Prestwood in Stoke or Stoke Hamlet as it was often known was a detached part of Stoke Mandeville parish. Those parishioners who lived in Stoke Hamlet historically would often attend Great Hampden church as it was nearer than their own. Many references to Stoke Hamlet residents can be found in the old Great Hampden register.

The scheme for a new church on Prestwood Common was born in the 1840s, a time when Charles Dickens had just published his famous work *A Christmas Carol*, a series of Corn Laws had been passed in Parliament and the people were feeling the full force of industrialisation. In addition, Tractarianism had emerged from the Anglican High Church Oxford Movement. This was part of a sentiment present in England at that time whereby aspects of religious and cultural life, including art and architecture, looked back to a perceived purity of ideology and Catholicism before the Reformation. Some of these cultural influences can be seen in the building of Holy Trinity Church in its medieval style gothic structure.

The Ecclesiastical Parish of Prestwood

JANUARY 1850



TIMELINE: From Concept to Consecration, a new church and a new parish

1844

The Reverend John Robert Pigott, Vicar of Hughenden (1836-1851) expressed concerns as to the 'spiritual wants' in the remotest parts of his large parish. Hughenden parish at that time stretched as far north as Nanfans Grange in Prestwood. Pigott began the task of collecting money for Prestwood church. At that time Buckinghamshire was still in the Diocese of Lincoln.

1845

Samuel Wilberforce became Bishop of Oxford and Buckinghamshire was transferred from the Diocese of Lincoln to the Diocese of Oxford.

1846

Wilberforce took the chair at a public meeting in Aylesbury in April of this year to formally launch the project for Prestwood's new church. Initially, the purpose of the project was to take into consideration the spiritual wants of the people of Prestwood Common, Denner Hill and Pigotts Common. Great Kingshill was included in the plans at a later date and Pigotts Common omitted.

Led by the Reverend Pigott, Vicar of Hughenden, a committee was formed to receive subscriptions for the building of the new church. Land for the new church was offered by Lord Carrington who owned over 245 acres in Prestwood, but the offer was not taken up. It was thought because the location of Carrington's land was not suitable. The new church needed to be in the geographical centre of the new parish.

Pigott appealed to wealthy friends and landowners who might be interested in raising money for the new church. Queen Adelaide, the Queen Dowager, headed the list of subscribers; although her donation of £25 was not the largest, it was publicly the highest profile. The Earl of Buckinghamshire, Lord Carrington, Sir Robert Frankland Russell of Chequers, the Bishop of Oxford and John Norris of Hughenden Manor also all pledged donations varying in amount from £25 to £50, plus there was an anonymous donation of £500. The largest gift was to come later in 1848 from Thomas Evetts, Curate of Clifton Reynes. Evetts had been nominated by Bishop Wilberforce to be the first Vicar of Prestwood.

The first design for the church was put forward in this year by Edward Buckton Lamb, the architect of St. Philips, Granville Square London and St. Martins, Gospel Oak. Lamb was known in his field as a 'Rogue Gothic Revivalist' as his designs were criticised for breaking with convention - in plan, style or detail.

From *The Ecclesiologist* (an architectural magazine) a comment at the time on the initial design of Prestwood church:

...We cannot speak strongly from so simple a drawing, but we must express our dissatisfaction. The picturesque is one thing aimed at. The chapel has a chancel at each end – seriously: at least we cannot otherwise explain the design. The style would seem to be Third pointed, meant to be made more picturesque but unusually high-pitched roofs and disproportionate pedimented buttresses. The other buildings are pretty, but the chapel is most unsuccessful...

1847

The building committee took note of the criticism of the original plans and by 1847 a further anonymous donor had offered the Reverend Pigott £200 for the insertion of a clerestory in order to lift the nave to a height of 33 feet.

1848

In April 1848, Lamb's amended designs were finally published, and a more conventional building style emerged.

Thomas Evetts, the newly nominated Vicar of Holy Trinity, made a further donation of £1,000 towards the church building project in this year and Evetts thus began to take an active part in the new church building project. Evetts also began to purchase a great deal of property in the district. In May of 1848 Evetts acquired Knives Farm and immediately conveyed three meadows of it to the Vicar of Hughenden and the Bishop of Oxford for the sum of £181. Thus, the new church came to be built on the farm's land Stockfield and the other buildings on parts of this, namely Little Home Field and the Front Orchard. Perhaps of note, is that Thomas Evetts, at this time, was a member of *The Oxford Society Promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture*. Perhaps Evetts involvement with this society also influenced the eventual design of Holy Trinity.

As to Lamb's amended design, some of the 'oddities' in the original disappeared, but the west end chancel remained. The Vicar of Hughenden wanted the pews of this area of the church appropriated (i.e. for pew rents) so that the wealthier members of the congregation might sit together.

There were financial pressures too. The cost of the church alone rose steadily, and the final sum was £1,400. However, it was proving difficult to raise adequate funds to cover the cost of the full project which included a parsonage house, a schoolhouse, schoolmaster's cottage, glebe and endowment. Thomas Evetts further donated more than £3,000 personally to the fund so that the project could be brought to a successful conclusion.

By July 1848, all was ready for the laying of the foundation stone and the ceremony was advertised for Wednesday 26th July at 11 o'clock. Inclement weather had been anticipated and a large tarpaulin was erected over the area and the damp ground covered with straw.

Bishop Wilberforce arrived from Oxford and headed 'a large assemblage of neighbouring clergy, gentry and persons of all classes..... including Lord Walsingham, Sir Robert and Lady Frankland-Russell, Sir William and Lady Galway ...' plus others. The proceedings were opened with prayers by the Vicar of Hughenden who was technically responsible for the church. Holy Trinity was initially a 'parochial chapel' of Hughenden until it legally became a parish church in 1852. The architect Lamb was also present and, as was custom, handed a silver trowel to the Bishop, who proceeded with the ceremony of the stone laying. The stone was lowered to the ground and struck with a mallet. A metal plate was attached to the stone which was engraved with the inscription:

..The first stone of this Church, built by Public Subscription and dedicated to the Holy and Undivided Trinity, was laid on Wednesday the 26th July 1848 by Samuel Wilberforce, Lord Bishop of Oxford..

The plate side of the stone later became embedded in the foundation, but part of the stone can be seen in the footings beneath the east window; it now carries an Ordnance Survey benchmark indicating a height of 612 feet above sea level.

After the ceremony the Bishop addressed the congregation and stated the new church in this scattered location would stand “to direct them in their proper course of duty”. The proceedings ended with prayers and a hymn, after which the company moved on to Great Missenden Church where another service followed. The collections at both places added another £20 to the building fund. After the stone laying ceremony, the building commenced although it was not without problems.

The church was built in the late Decorated style (looking back to medieval church architecture) and constructed of local flints and white sandstones (Denner Hill Stone) with Bath Stone dressings. The walls are of flint and lime mortar and two feet thick except for the bell-cote which is three feet in depth. The nave itself is 32 feet in length and 15½ feet wide with a chancel arch at each end. The nave has high, narrow, triple chamfered arches which contrast with the wide double chamfered ‘drop’ arches of the nave arcade. Those of the first two bays, Desmond Keen pointed out in 1997 *‘have almost lost their points while the third pair are miniature ones with a span of only three feet, the arches dying flat into the east wall of the nave’*.

During the building process concerns were raised about the octagonal pillars in the nave. They are less than six feet high and there was an initial attempt to construct them in a variety of hard building chalk as is often found with Chiltern medieval churches.

The builder had not taken into account the effects of autumn frosts and rain, so the pillars crumbled.

From the Bucks Herald: 16th December 1848:

..The church is already in a dangerous state in consequence of the effect of the weather on the pillars.. a new instance of the expensive results of false economy...

Reverend Pigott wrote letters to the papers explaining the situation and that the crumbling chalk had to be replaced with Bath Stone. Another difficulty was the insolvency of the building contractor and inevitably consecration of the new church was postponed, and on more than one occasion.

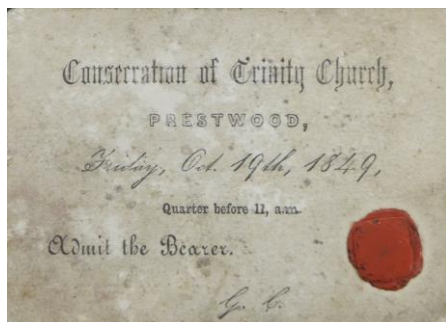


From an 1848 lithograph design for Holy Trinity Church, Church School and Schoolmaster's House

1849

The church was at last ready for consecration on Friday, 19th October 1849. Bishop Wilberforce began the ceremony by consecrating the churchyard. He then proceeded to the consecration of the building. A morning service followed during which the Bishop baptised the infant son of Thomas Evetts, the new incumbent. After the service, the Bishop and many of the congregation withdrew to the parsonage, where "*a very abundant and elegant luncheon*" awaited them. Including the Bishop, over thirty of the neighbouring clergy were present. It was thought Benjamin Disraeli was also present at the ceremony. A letter to close friend and solicitor Philip Rose (16 Oct 1849) stated he had intended to be there '*..I suppose I shall see you at Prestwood consecration.*'

However, Disraeli states in a later letter to his sister Sarah (26 Oct 1849) that he did not attend as he had been unwell:
I have been unwell.....I was not at the Consecration. It was too crowded and rather confused. Afterwards a dinner of the mass: all the clergymen connected with the affair & P. Rose at Hampden. We dined there the day before & met the Bishop & the Lloyds & Evetts, who I am sorry to say reads through his nose & I fear will not draw.



1850

An independent census commissioned by the church to discover the number of Prestwood residents located in each of the parts of the three old parishes who would be included in a new one. A map of the proposed new parish was also drawn. Collectively, there were 792 men, women and children accounted for on this church census.

1852

As Lord of the Manor and Patron of Hughenden, Disraeli gave his consent to the creation of a new parish of Prestwood. Finally, on 5th April 1852 Queen Victoria signed the Order in Council creating the new ecclesiastical parish and Holy Trinity began its life as a parish church.

THE BUILDING: Past and Present

Introduction

Thomas Evetts, the first incumbent of Holy Trinity, who was heavily involved with the building of the church, was at Oxford University during the early days of the Oxford Movement. Evetts had also been a member *The Oxford Society Promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture*. At Holy Trinity there are many indications that Tractarian influences were at work in its design. These influences give a somewhat medieval gothic feel to the church, especially in its colonnade of pillars and chamfered arches.

In each of the following descriptions of the church's architectural features, the order is chosen as a visitor to the church would usually enter the building and start their journey around the church. There is a glossary of architectural terms used at the back of this guide to help with explanation of these features. There is also a separate section further on in the guide that gives detailed information regarding the stained glass.

West End Chancel: Baptistry and Bell-cote

Today the church is mainly entered via an arched porch at the southern entrance of the west end. The inner glass doors and new external wooden door replaced a heavy wooden inner door in the 2015 refurbishment of the church. The west end chancel, created by Lamb, serves as a baptistry and sits under a scissor truss internal wooden roof. The font is close to its original location but the stone base, which took up a large amount of floor space has been removed. The base was cut much smaller and re-used as a set of outside steps to the east door replacing the wooden ones there. The floor tiles show where the old font base stood.

In 1849 the font was described as:

...a beautiful piece of workmanship...surrounded by handsome cushions and a superb oak cover, let down from the roof.

Desmond Keen described the decoration on the font in his 1997 guide:

...A moulded stem with a band of leaf and ball flower rises from the centre of an octagonal step; from this, eight traceried panels curve outwards in the manner of the fourteenth century font at Hedon, Yorkshire. Lamb has used four designs of his 'close, cuspy tracery' which pair diagonally – an artistic device found in other parts of the church. ...

The bell-cote at Holy Trinity sits on top of the west gable of the nave and rises up to 50 feet. It contains only one bell by Mears bearing the date 1849, for which the original estimate allowed was £45. The lancet opening for the bell is narrow and its sides had to be recessed to take the lip of the bell. This meant the bell had to be hung static and it can only be 'clappered'; therefore, no consecutive peel of bells here. The bell tower was originally completed with an ornate ball pinnacle, but this collapsed in 1948. There are also early reports of a flag being flown from Holy Trinity on special occasions.

The Nave

Architect Lamb's arches in the nave at Holy Trinity are unusual in that they were completed in stone and the abacuses diminish rather than expand above the capitals. The baptistery arch leading into the nave is an elaborate composition with the responds stopping halfway down. They end with ornate corbels carved with shields bearing the sacred monogram and the Trinity

double triangle, surrounded by the vine, grapes and bramble flowers. Both this and the chancel arch have pyramids at the springers.

At Easter 1914 a new oak litany desk and brass lectern were presented in memory of Helen Gardner. At the same time Mrs A. Gardner gave a new brass pulpit desk. The lectern replaced the original wooden desk which was designed to suit the Gothic architecture. The old plans of Holy Trinity nave show a reading desk next to a stone column facing north west from a step opposite the pulpit with access beneath the other miniature arch. All that appears to remain in the modern setting of Holy Trinity from the 1914 additions is the brass lectern.

Symbolic shields in nave roof

Four of the nave roof corbels are plain and four have moulded girdles of leaves but most interesting are the wooden shields on the remaining eight corbels. They date from 1849 and are painted with emblems of the Eucharist, Passion, Holy Trinity and the Blessed Virgin Mary. They are probably the work of Elizabeth Smith Parker Evetts (wife of the first incumbent) and her sister Miss Parker of Oxford.

The Shields- In pairs starting from East Chancel end down to West Chancel end

North side of Nave

Pelican vulning
Nails and crowns of thorns
Passion flower
Church's chalice with Host

South side of Nave

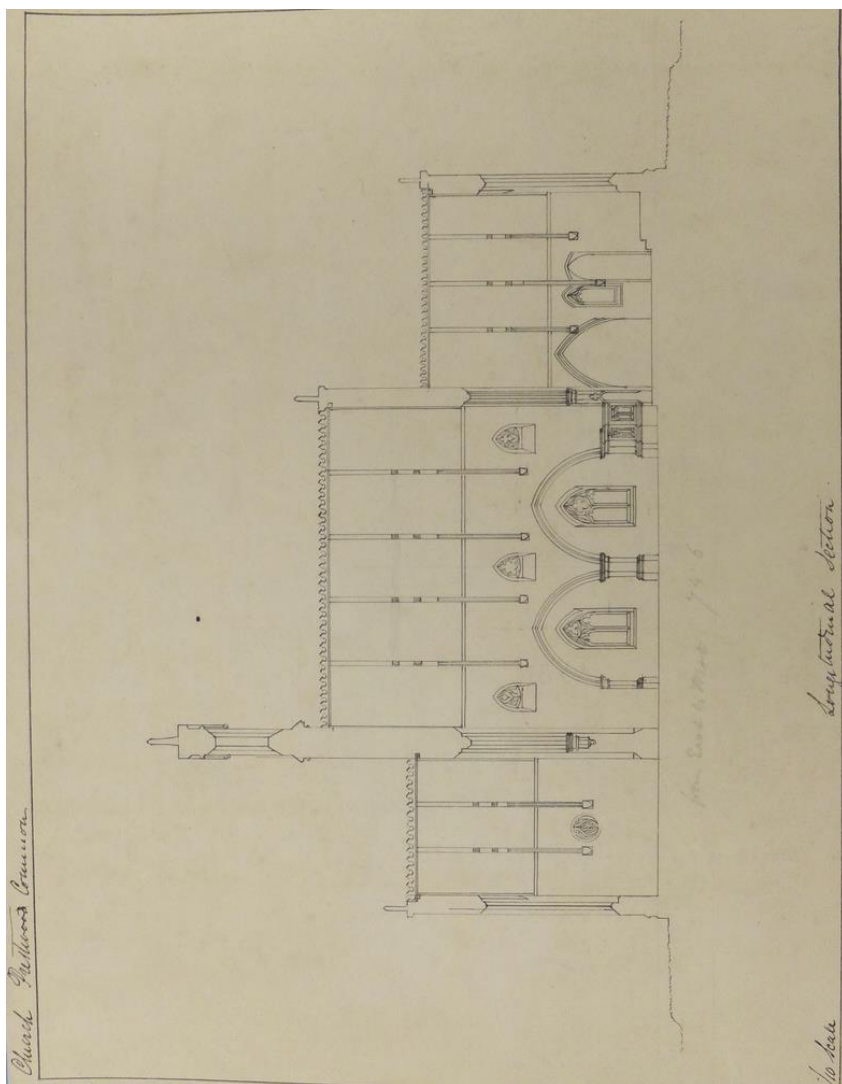
Arms of the Trinity
Madonna lilies
Double triangle/Trinity star
Agnus Dei

The pelican feeding its young with its own blood (vulning) is also part of the arms of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where Evetts graduated. This shield device may also be seen on the dripstone termination of the east window and in the old oak altar, now in the vestry. They carry the cross and the sacred monogram.

Clerestory

A clerestory is often installed in a church to enable more light to enter the building. At Holy Trinity the clerestory windows, high above the nave, consist of six small spherical triangles, three each side, but they admit little light; for all have stained glass and four have tracery. The wide splays and sloping sills designed to throw down the light were not considered effective. This feature was an addition to the original design following criticism of Lamb's work. It is similar to the thirteenth century clerestory at Stanton St. John in Oxfordshire where the aisle parapet walls rise more steeply than the roof slope and tend to obscure the window range, suggesting the building is all under one roof. At Holy Trinity the same impression is given by stepping the parapets of the aisle walls and doubling the shoulder stones of the chancel gable.

Although subsequent alterations to the chancel and vestry have largely destroyed the feature here, it can still be seen at the east end of the south aisle. Viewed at a distance, the triangles suggest a range of much larger Gothic windows.



Original longitudinal section showing internal arches and triangular clerestory windows, date c1849

Side aisles

The north and south aisles are only 7½ feet wide. Until 2015 these aisles were furnished with traditional pews, thus giving quite a crowded feel. This congestion has now been resolved with the newer seating arrangements.

The aisle walls are built solidly of flints laid more or less at random. There were insufficient funds for finely dressed stonework to the walls, so architect Lamb had the internal walls plastered over. In 1957 the Stations of the Cross, presented by Dorothy Rance, were added and can be found adorning the inside walls of both side aisles carrying on into the walls of the west end of the nave. The Stations had restoration work to them in 2018.

The tracery of the principal aisle windows is quite conventional for a Lamb design, but the sills are only 28 inches above floor level; and as the windows all originally had plain glass, they provided the distraction of a congregation clearly visible to anyone outside and vice versa.

Like the south doorway all the windows (except the clerestory) have distinct chamfered rere-arches. The chamfer is also cut up into the soffits and the arches die flat into the splays. Two of the principal roof timbers in each aisle are supported on plain corbels which emerge strangely from the keystones of the arches.

Pulpit

Often pulpits are carved in wood, but Holy Trinity has one carved in stone. The pulpit has a substantial moulded base and presents three rectangular panels of finely carved blind tracery with Tudor rose bosses, surmounted by a moulded cornice with a frieze of leaf and ballflower.

It stands rather low and is approached by three steps under the small archway. The two miniature arches were intended as access points for both preacher and reader but one of Lamb's section drawings omits this third bay which would have therefore required an entrance from the chancel's step. A final plain panel brings the pulpit up against the chancel arch and the base mouldings link those of the adjacent pillar with which the chancel arch respond.

Chancel and Sanctuary

The chancel of Holy Trinity has had several alterations in its long history. When first built, architecturally the view presented was of low, intersecting roof timbers clustering over the choir stalls and coming to rest on corbels only four feet above the floor. The east window was also very low, and the altar stood beneath it. The historian J. J. Sheahan described the roof of the chancel in 1861 as being 'richly carved' but the overall effect of this space must have been oppressive - with windowsills at knee height and very little light.

Originally, the sanctuary area within the chancel had been adorned with a communion table (now in the vestry) covered with an elaborate tapestry of crimson velvet with gold thread needlework of a cross and crown of thorns, made by the first incumbent's wife Mrs Evetts and her sister. At each end of the table were carved antique oak chairs. There was also a low openwork chancel screen and a communion rail of wood and wrought iron with ivory decorated brackets in brass.

In 1884, the incumbent the Reverend Harry Morland Wells commissioned and paid for the chancel to be raised approximately five feet and a new barrel roof was added to

relieve the overpowering effect of the heavy oak beams. This provided headroom for a new organ on the north side which was desperately needed. The chancel floor was raised from one to two steps above the nave and the sanctuary three steps higher. As a result of these renovations Lamb's small round window in the north chancel gable disappeared.

Tudor roses were painted in the bay above the sanctuary to match those of the bosses on the cant strips of the new roof so as to form a canopy of honour. The chancel roof itself rests upon a moulded cornice which includes finely carved stone corbels with designs of oak, ivy, wheat, vine with grapes, lily, passionflower, convolvulus and the rose. A new lancet window was included in the south wall to light the choir stalls. The chancel was re-opened on Sunday 19th October 1884, the harvest thanksgiving and thirty fifth anniversary of the church's consecration. Canon Thomas Evetts travelled over from Monks Risborough for evensong to ... *a very large congregation; about 100 people unable to get in to the church..*

Raising the chancel roof five feet effected that the east window was also lifted five feet above the altar and its mullions continued downwards to form a reredos of three panels. These were filled with Venetian glass mosaic by Salviati and depict crowned Madonna lilies and irises (for Our Lady and St. Joseph) with the cross, dove, alpha and omega symbols, and the arms of the Trinity in the centre. The mosaics were the gift of Mrs H. M Wells wife of the incumbent at that time. In 1884 the Venetian glass would have been an expensive and elaborate purchase and perhaps reflected the importance of the church within in the community or perhaps more personally to Mrs. Wells herself.



Holy Trinity Reredos

The contemporary new furnishings for the sanctuary in 1884 were Tractarian in style; the top of the altar was lengthened by the addition of an oak board and to this were added side curtains, coloured frontals and brass ornaments. Two large wrought iron candelabra (from local blacksmith Hildreths) were also presented by the Vicar's daughters.

Lamb's piscina (south wall) and the two commandment panels (east wall) were left undisturbed. These three niches have traceried heads and ogee labels with vine leaf carving. They relieve the somewhat gaunt appearance of the reredos. William Pitt, organist and headmaster of the church school at that time, carved an ornamental Gothic framework in oak which was later coloured gold. This was placed around the mosaic panels and formed part of the improvement scheme which marked the Golden Jubilee of the consecration in 1899. Pitt's new hymn boards of that era remained in use until the recent renovations.

In 1905 a small door was cut into the north wall of the chancel so that clergy and choir could process directly to their places instead of making an awkward entrance from the back of the organ into the north aisle (the organ no longer present in this location).

New furniture for the chancel was provided by the parish in 1945. The fixed communion rail and choir stalls were controversially removed, and the floor was re-tiled. In his 1997 history of the church Desmond Keen states of the 1945 chancel scheme:

..only the credence shelf and eight oak chairs remain...This arrangement relieved a very congested chancel and was intended to facilitate a more dignified celebration of the Eucharist....

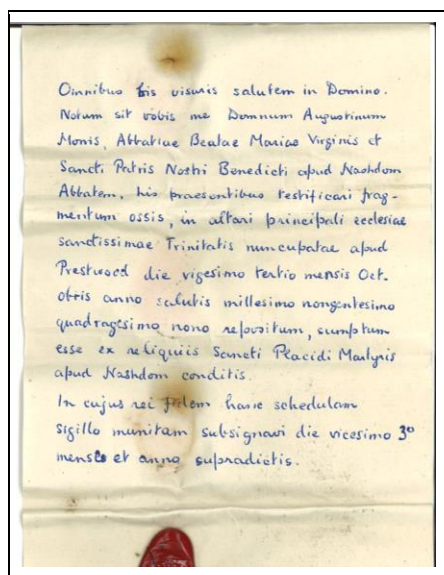
In 1949, to mark the centenary of the church, a new Portland Stone altar borne upon two carved rectangular pillars was installed in the chancel. It had been designed by the incumbent Vicar.

Further alterations were carried in 1989. The sanctuary was reduced to one step and the stone altar moved four feet to the West. It was then possible to lower the tabernacle and reveal the Trinity panel of the mosaic. The original organ chamber was extended into the vestry area in order to make a weekday chapel, utilising Lamb's original oak communion table.

In the recent 2015 refurbishment of the church the chancel space was completely redesigned to make it fit for the 21st century. The previous chancel steps have been removed and remodelled. They are now arc shaped to form a dais and tiled to blend with the new floor of the chancel. They also now project out into the nave. The

furniture and new altar are easily movable to make the chancel space more adaptable; the space now having a light and airy feel, which must be in complete contrast to that originally designed by architect Lamb. The old stone centenary altar of 1949 has gone but is still retained by the church and now stored away. The reliquary that was contained in the old altar, purportedly to be associated with St. Placid, has been placed within the new wooden altar.

Attestation letter to the relics of St. Placid



Translated from the Latin:

"To all those who look upon this, salvation of the Lord. Let it be known to you that I, Dom Augustine Morris, Abbot of the Abbey of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Our Holy Father Benedict at Nashdom, bear witness in the present document that the fragment of bone on

the chief altar of the church that is named after the Most Holy Trinity at Prestwood, that was deposited on the twenty-third day of the month of October, in the year of salvation 1949, was taken from the remains of St. Placid the Martyr, which were laid at Nashdom.

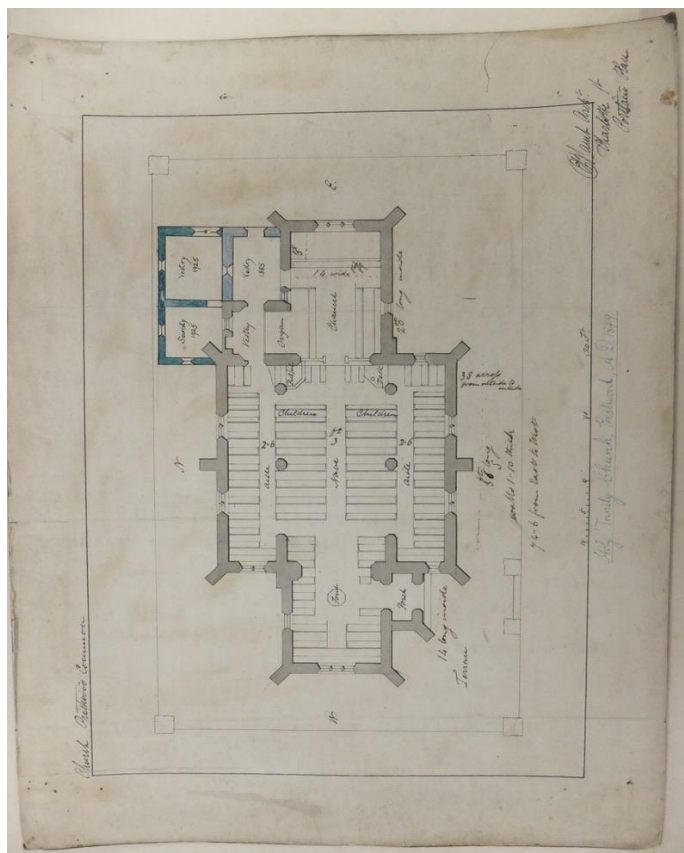
In proof of which, I have undersigned this paper, which has been secured by my seal, on the twenty third day of the aforementioned month and year”

The original piscina in the chancel still remains and the old Calvary cross that hung above the chancel arch has gone. The tiles of the reredos also had a small amount of restoration work carried out in 2017 and it was advised by the restoration company that sources of heat (e.g. candles) were not placed near the piece as this may be detrimental. The commandment niches, either side of the reredos, have been adapted for flower arrangements for which shelves had been made in 1952 by John Robey, with the Tudor rose carved by Ernest Robertson.

Vestry and Organs

The original small vestry was in effect a continuation of the north aisle, separated from it and from the chancel by double-chamfered arches. The first small pipe organ stood beneath one of these arches and formed a screen between chancel and vestry. The Reverend Wells extended the vestry eastward as part of the 1884 scheme. The new organ of 1891 was built partly into the 1849 vestry area with its console projecting into the chancel. This extension necessitated the removal of the small window (Flight of Egypt) from the sanctuary into the vestry, which was also given an additional new lancet window. Both windows were then placed in the north wall. There was a narrow door on the east of the vestry which was retained. The effect of this at the time was

that the vestry had no light of its own and relied upon borrowed light from the north aisle.



crosses. The windows of 1849 and 1884 were moved into the sacristy and two new ones installed in the choir vestry, and its outside door widened. At this time the body of the organ was moved further north out of the chancel into the vestry space of 1849 to make room for the choir stall which had been sacrificed in 1891. The old organ of 1891 and its twentieth century successors are now long gone and have been replaced by a modern organ thereby releasing much needed space.

The vestry had further alterations carried out in the 2015 re-ordering of the church. The existing walls, ceiling, floors and storage cupboards of the old vestry were removed and made good. New walls, floor and ceiling were installed to accommodate a kitchenette area, storage units and a disabled toilet to make the church a more flexible space for the 21st century. The current vestry now sits behind the new kitchenette area in the 1925 extension space in the northern section of the church.

Heat, Light and Seating

The original plan left no space for heating stoves, but they were in place by 1854 when the first bill for coal was recorded. These heating stoves were eventually discarded in 1905 in favour of a new central heating system. The renovations of 2015 saw the installation of a new tiled surface to the floor with modern underfloor heating.

Lighting was originally provided by candles and the original iron and brass fittings still remain on the pillars in the nave. In its early days Prestwood followed custom and winter Evensongs that were sung in the afternoon. Hanging paraffin lamps had made their appearance by 1875 and the Golden Jubilee of 1899 saw the arrival of a set of new lamps to help mark this important

milestone. Electric light was eventually added to the church in 1930 in memory of Isabel Cameron Gardner.

The original seating arrangement at Holy Trinity was a controversial issue. Filling the church with long pews which would leave no gangways in the side aisles, it was hoped would provide 302 sittings. Even then there would still be no room for the 500 of those in the new parish for whom it was thought were 'most needful', but the members of the building committee may not have been aware of the fact that the long-established Baptist churches at Great Missenden (1778), Little Kingshill (1814) and Kiln Common, Prestwood (1823) claimed the allegiance of many local people.

After much deliberation and a failed appeal for a grant to the Incorporated Church Building Society (which would have allowed for some appropriated seats at Holy Trinity) a seating plan for 248 was provided for and no appropriated seats. The numbers provided for in the eventual seating layout still made for a very cramped interior within the church due to the number and layout of pews. In 1920 in order to make the church more comfortable, all the old pews were entirely rebuilt and re-spaced in honour of Annie Mackay Hooper. The seating accommodation was thus reduced to around 180 individuals.

These static pews disappeared in the 2015 refurbishment and were replaced with easily movable benches and chairs to accommodate 150 persons. The new church furniture was designed and manufactured by Treske Church Furniture of North Yorkshire, thus making the interior of the church adaptable for many different kinds of church and social events.

Roof

Internally, the roof construction is interesting although not as adventurous as in Lamb's greater churches. There is a neat illusion present in that the nave and baptistery's internal roof trusses have collars above the scissor beams and false arch braces below them. The stone corbels which appear to support the timbers are purely ornamental – as is the one that emerges noticeably from the arch above the main door and pretends to carry the baptistery roof. The roofs have no common rafters and were to be 'framed in fir'; the external tiles were then carried upon the thick 3½ inch battens resting on the principals.

By the late 19th century restoration work to the roof was already needed: a new barrel roof ceiling to the chancel in 1884, and between 1887 and 1894 much repair work on the roofs of the nave and west end plus a new zinc roof for the north aisles and porch.

Restoration work in 1962 resulted in all the roofs having to be stripped, re-battened and treated for beetle infestation. Many of the original hand-made tiles were re-used so that only the west end and the ridges required new ones. The aisle roofs were also so badly decayed that they had to be completely replaced with Colombian Pine and Red Cedar and the old zinc coverings replaced with lead. These restoration works also revealed that the undersides of the roof battens had been stained to form the original ceiling. Match boarding had been added later, and the present plaster ceilings were part of a 1919 scheme to make the church warmer. This work destroyed the effect of Lamb's dark forest of timber which was obtained as one looked upwards.

In 1996 the Nuralite roof of a 1980s restoration (after theft of lead from the roof) was replaced with stainless steel, and new coping stones provided over the parapet. A new roof was also provided over the porch in that year which included some modernisation to the roof drainage system.

External aspect

Outside the building there is an interesting collection of stone carving that can be found in the edges of the window and doorway arches and also the bell-cote. As well as crown, mitre and Gothic leaf and flower designs, other local plants can be seen. These include oak, ivy, holly, bramble and roses. The east window of the south side aisle has a rose and the Madonna lily in acknowledgment of the traditional east face setting of the Lady Chapel. The lychgate structure echoes the roof timbers of the church. There were also originally two low 'dog doors' at the entrance of the lychgate, the old hinges still visible.

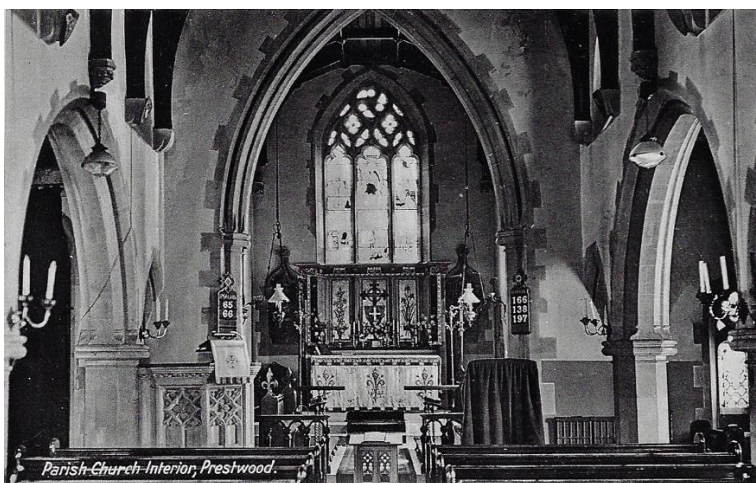
The circular churchyard is less than an acre in area and in 1938 was extended westward into the old vicarage kitchen garden. Immediately surrounding the church Lamb's lawn terrace with its massive Denner Hill corner stones has been left undisturbed except for a diversion of the path on the west side. The yew trees are part of Thomas Evetts' tree planting scheme for both the church and the vicarage.

Although at first sight Holy Trinity has a very conventional appearance, it must be remembered that some of the original intended peculiarities were suppressed before the building work was begun and that later alterations have largely destroyed architect Lamb's east end proportions.



c1902 to 1914

Early photograph showing hanging paraffin lamps for lighting

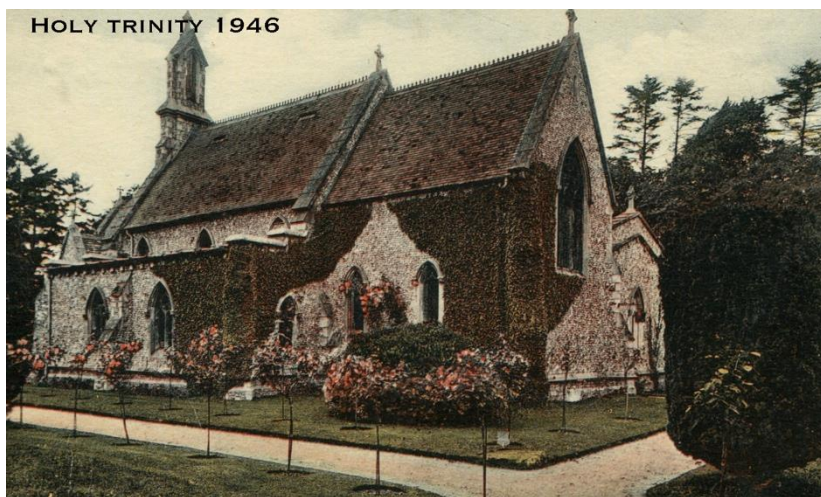


c1930s

Photograph showing newly installed electric lights



Holy Trinity 1908



Holy Trinity 1946

The Daisy Bush Legacy

Mrs Daisy Bush, former Prestwood schoolteacher and Holy Trinity parishioner died in March 2008. In her Will she left a substantial bequest for the refurbishment and re-decoration of the church. This bequest was the catalyst to explore how the church could be refurbished to fit the needs of the 21st century. New heating, lighting and seating were to be the main priorities, to make the church a light and comfortable place to be in. The sound system was to be improved and new facilities to be provided, namely a kitchenette and disabled toilet. Access to the church was also to be looked at.

The Diocesan Advisory Committee, the Victorian Society, English Heritage and the District Council Historic Buildings Officer were all consulted, as was the eminent Art Historian Sir Roy Strong, Holy Trinity being a Grade II listed building. In addition, a booklet on the proposals *The Future Shape of Holy Trinity Church* was produced in October 2013 for the church community and congregation to consult, and also to also have their say.

After much consultation and additional funds raised to fully enable the project of refurbishment the alterations went ahead in 2015. It was decided not to alter the external profile of the church other than removal of the old doors to the west chancel that contains the baptistery and to have installed new external wooden doors and internal glass entry doors. A new pathway to the porch was laid plus a handrail installed making access for the disabled easier.

Internally, the chancel which contains the sanctuary remained at the east end and was extended into the nave with an arc shaped

tilled dais. The wooden shelf within the east window of the chancel was removed and the area surrounding the window made good. Restoration work was later carried out to the reredos and Stations of the Cross in 2017 and 2018 respectively.

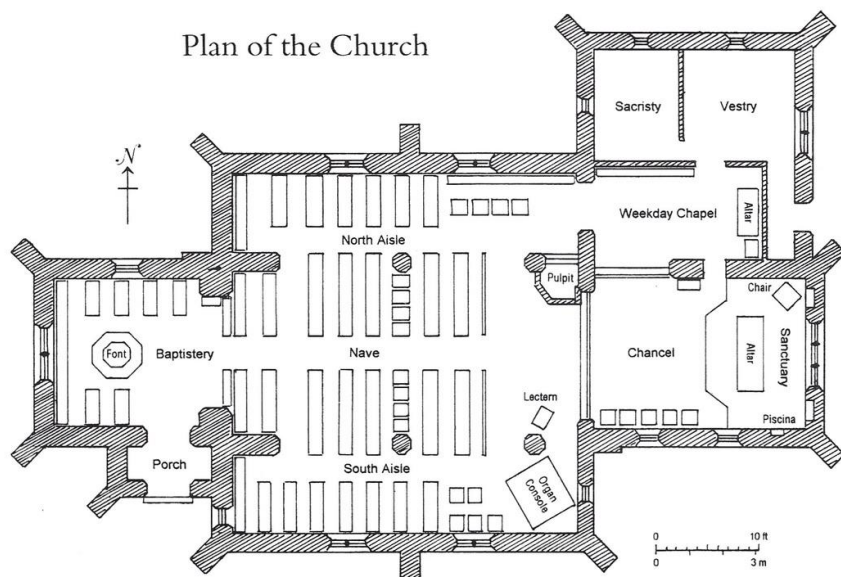
A new underfloor heating system was installed throughout the church and covered over with fine Italian tiles. The Calvary cross was removed from the chancel arch and put into storage as was the old centenary stone altar. The old altar was replaced with a movable wooden altar table with the St. Placid relic from the old altar installed within it.

The existing vestry and sacristy walls were taken down, the floors and storage removed and made good. New walls, floors and ceilings were created, thus enabling a kitchenette with shutters and a disabled toilet to be included within the church. The modern vestry now sits in the 1925 extension area albeit reduced in size due to the inclusion of the disabled toilet.

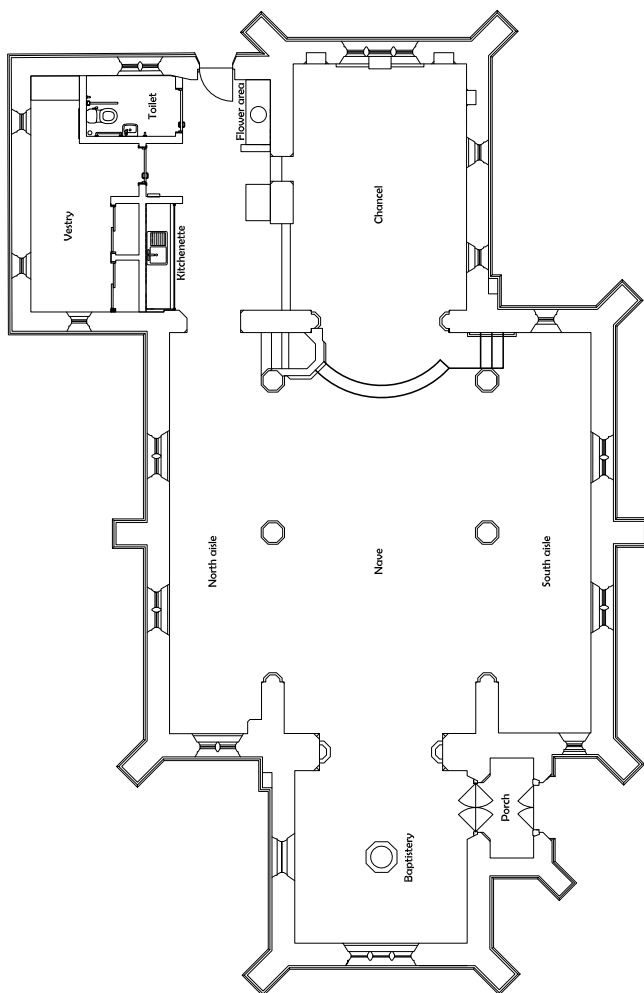
The font remained close to its original location (moved back a little) but with the large stone base removed freeing up some floor space around it. The font base was cut to replace external wooden steps at the east end door. The old pews were removed, and new movable flexible seating for 150 persons commissioned, in the form of benches and chairs.

To complete the transformation into a 21st century facility the church also has new lighting, Wi-Fi and a pull-down screen in the chancel. The church was ready to be re-consecrated for use on 13th December 2015 by the Bishop of Buckingham, Alan Wilson.

The church now has a light and airy feel; a space that retains the essential elements of its original Victorian beauty but overall a space for the modern era. In addition to the regular congregational worship, activities today within the church can range from streaming a live service to a Pilates or Yoga class, and much more.



Church layout before 2015 re-ordering (from 1997 Guide)



Church layout after the 2015 re-ordering

Stained Glass

Baptistery - West

Most light came originally from this three-light window which was glazed with pale green glass and elaborately leaded. It contained three stained insets -the Royal Arms, Oxford Diocesan Arms and a small medallion giving the date of the church (see Chancel) This glass was replaced with a modern St. Christopher by Farrar-Bell and commemorates Nellie Stevens.

Michael Farrar-Bell (1911-1993) was a well-known stained glass and postage stamp designer. He was also known as a designer of pub signs when working for the company *Clayton and Bell*.

Baptistery - North

Lamb's circular windows normally avoided the expected 'rose' tracery and this is no exception. This vertical reticulated tracery is a design Lamb used at Healey in Yorkshire and elsewhere.

Clerestory

The two centre lights contain the arms of the Bishop of Lincoln (south) and Oxford (north). They not only mark the transfer of Buckinghamshire from the diocese of Lincoln to that of Oxford in 1845, but also form a personal compliment to the two Bishops; Dr. Kaye of Lincoln ordained Thomas Evetts (first vicar), and Bishop Wilberforce of Oxford who nominated him for Prestwood and consecrated the building. The other windows include conventional leaf and flower designs, the cross, double triangle (Trinity star) and the sacred monogram.

South Aisle - East

Figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary by M. C. Farrar-Bell (1969) in memory of Derek Lawrence. The original St. Paul glass which included Lamb's monogram were re-used in glass here.

South Aisle - South

These two windows were re-glazed in 1971 by J. E. Nuttgens and Gilbert Sheedy on the subjects of the Annunciation and the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This glass together with the seraphim in the two mouchettes of the little round window form a memorial to H.R. Clark - Churchwarden 1940-1968.

Joseph Edward Nuttgens (1892-1982) was a well-known stained-glass designer of German and English descent: his family having moved to England in 1895. Nuttgens was eventually to set up his own studio in the Chilterns in 1939. After his death in 1982, his son, also named Joseph, re-established his father's studio to continue designing and producing stained glass for many churches and cathedrals.

North Aisle - East

The Entombment, Resurrection and Phoenix by Oliphant (1858). A memorial to Mrs. Evetts, mother of the first Vicar.

North Aisle - West

A children's window by Joseph Nuttgens (1986), the gift of Joyce and Robert Crane.

It is probable that the designer of the children's window was Joseph, the son of the well-known stained-glass designer Joseph Edward Nuttgens (1892-1982), mentioned previously.

Chancel - East

Te Deum by Burlinson & Grylls; presented by Mrs Elizabeth Busk of Codicote Lodge (mother of Mrs H. M. Wells), cost £85. The first window here was the gift of Lady Frankland-Russell of Chequers Court. The central subject is Christ Blessing the World which was removed in 1885 and some of the figured glass from the other two lights was re-used in two of the south side windows.

Chancel – North

The Flight into Egypt said to be presented by the Baronet and politician Sir Robert Frankland-Russell (1849). This window was moved to the Sacristy; its shape suggests there was once a credence shelf beneath it.

Chancel - South

Lancet with Mystical Roses on a naturalistic climbing stem (1849) presented by Sir Robert's daughter. Although the Frankland-Russells designed glass for other churches in their patronage it is not recorded whether the Holy Trinity windows were their work. There are many points of resemblance in the glass of their Lamb churches; it is almost certain that the designs are either by them or Lamb himself.

In 1969 Lamb's St. Paul (from the south side) and date medallion (Baptistery) were re-used in new glass here.

ASHES GARDEN MEMORIAL

The area in Holy Trinity church yard where ashes are currently interred is nearly full. Normally, when a graveyard or ashes garden is full administration and maintenance passes to the local council (via the parish council). However, Holy Trinity wished to continue to provide these crucial end of life services, both cremation and burial, well into the future for the local community. To do this a fund of £21,000 was consequently needed by Holy Trinity to expand the use of the ashes garden.

Through the generous donations of local businesses and parishioners, this target of £21,000 has almost been reached and the fund is being used to include a memorial wall in the garden to commemorate those individuals whose ashes will continue to be placed there for the foreseeable future.

The decorative stone memorial wall commissioned has been designed by local stonemason Martin Cook of Lane End. It wraps around a section of the perimeter of the current ashes garden in the churchyard. Set into the existing laurel hedge, the wall consists of seven panels of York stone. There are three central panels which will display of a 'Tree of Life' relief carving with an engraved inscription:

"The tree of life stands in God's presence, and I will give to anyone who conquers the right to eat from it" (Book of Revelation 2:7).

The tree carving reflects the cherry tree which is the central feature of the ashes garden.



New Ashes Garden Memorial

And as can be seen, in addition to the three central panels there are four flanking stones (two on each side) on which names and dates of those remembered will be inscribed. Smaller individual stones can be purchased by families who want their own permanent family memorials.

THE PRESTWOOD CHURCH ESTATE- its associated buildings

Prestwood Parsonage House

It has been commented on as to why Thomas Evetts had built such a large parsonage house for himself and his family. Thomas Evetts was the son of a wealthy Brewer in Oxford. His father, John Evetts, died when Thomas was a young boy leaving him and his surviving brother William well provided for. Interestingly, Thomas' brother William Evetts had purchased Tackley Park in Oxfordshire in 1846, so perhaps Thomas was influenced a little at the time by the grandness of his brother's house.

However, Disraeli's letters from the time reveal some of the background to Evetts involvement with Prestwood Church and Parsonage. Disraeli's letter to his sister Sarah on 25th August 1849:

....Instead of the consecration of Prestwood Church they are all in confusion. I wish I cd send you the correspondence wh: is amusing & wh: wd. make you acquainted with the story, too long to give. In brief, the deed executed by myself & Pigott & the B. of Oxon vesting the patronage in him is invalid. & as they have spent much more money than is subscribed & want more, the committee have induced the intended clergyman Evetts to promise to 'carry out' as they call it the whole concern provided the presentation is given to him & his for ever.

The 'whole concern' probably included the church school and the schoolmaster's house as well as the church and parsonage. It appears there was some disagreement over the funding of the church, as the budget had overrun. Disraeli also comments on the parsonage house Evetts had built as being:

...fit for a Squire & grounds & gardens which alone cost £500: this independent of the £3,000 for Church & House towards which Evetts has subscribed I believe a moiety...

And later Disraeli writes in a letter to his sister Sarah in November 1849;

...I gave Evetts the presentation on representation which I could not refuse. Notwithstanding this, I believe he has left the committee... to pay the balance overdue to the builders etc. Pigott's share alone is £100 which makes him look immensely like a calf. Instead of £800 per annum in land he has only purchased 80. He (Evetts) is a young ultra-Puseyite & has built and furnished a house, very Tudorish inside and out – having evidently paid many visits to Wardour St. for the purpose and not spared his pocket. He is not a bad sort of fellow, when he gets over his extraordinary shyness & has some taste & impulse – but in the pulpit I am told a sad nasal driveller & I fear won't draw.....

The old parsonage house with its 'pleasure gardens' cost £2,000 to complete.

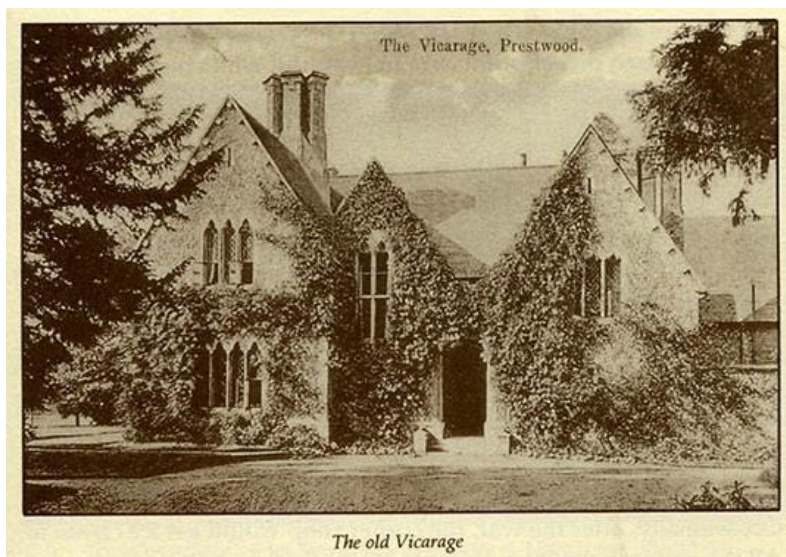
For a time in the twentieth century the parsonage became an old people's home, known as Prestwood Park House. A Listed architectural description from Historic England in 2001:

..former Vicarage, now old people's home. 1849. By E B Lamb. Rubble flint with sandstone quoins and limestone dressings. Tiled roof with projecting blocks of sandstone along gable verges. Stone stacks, large one on south wing of four clustered shafts. Two storeys, east elevation with three gables, the left hand one set forward. Door with Tudor arch between two right hand gables. Two single light windows each side. Stone mullioned windows with

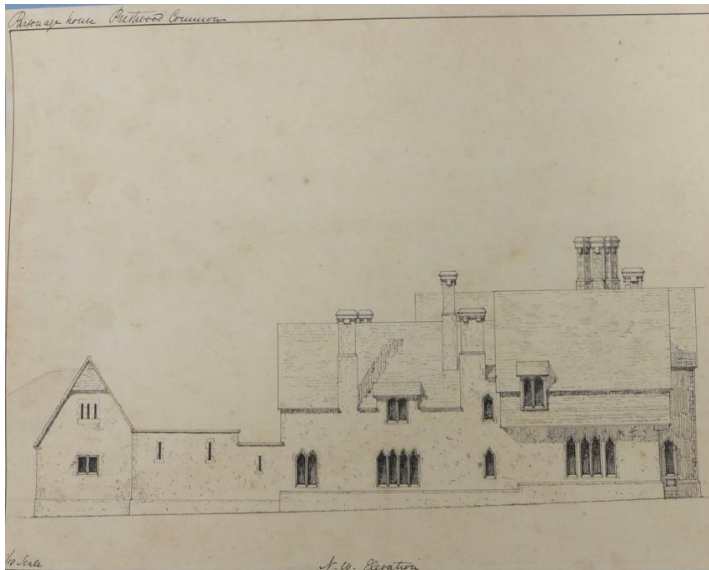
cusped heads, 4-light on left of ground floor; 3-light above; 2-light stair window on left door and a 3-light to first floor right. Attic vents in gables. Wall to service yard on right with gate piers. Service wing on far right, one storey and attic, one upper window in gable with tile hanging above, gable loft door in north roof slope.

Today, the old parsonage is still known as Prestwood Park House but now having been converted into private apartments.

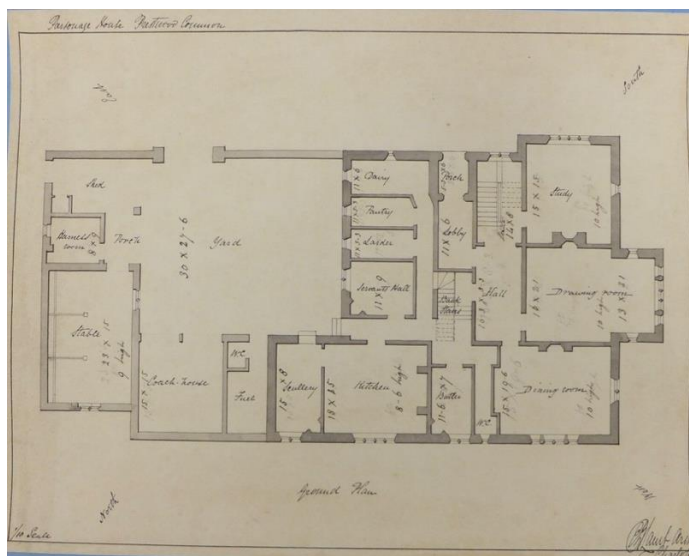
The current vicarage is a detached sixties build house.



Photograph of the old parsonage – 20th century



Parsonage House NW Aspect – 1848/9



Parsonage House – Original Ground Floor Plan

Prestwood Church School and Cottage

Prestwood Church School was the first known school in the village and provided education for the parish's children until the council school was built in 1908, in Moat Lane. The building was originally intended to be a more elaborate structure than was eventually built, as can be seen from the 1848 depiction of the church and school. The official government census of 1851 indicated there were around 50 or so pupils possibly attending the church school in that year, a third of the parish's eligible children under 13. Forty years later, by 1891, the number possibly attending was over 160, approximately three quarters of the parish's eligible children.

The Elementary Education Act had come into effect in 1870 and from around this time the church school kept a logbook which still survives. A photocopy is held at the Buckinghamshire Archives in Aylesbury, the photocopy enabled by the stalwart efforts of local historian Desmond Keen. The logbook gives an insight into the subjects taught at the school and includes little anecdotes in it such as - the school would close in the afternoon in the summer if there was a local cricket match or the Baptist church was holding a village tea!

After the new council school was established in Moat Lane the old church schoolhouse was used as a Sunday school. A letter from the Reverend Sidney Smith dated 29th June 1957 to the Oxford Diocesan Council of Education:

.....The school building is used as a Sunday School and Parish Room and that the Schoolmasters cottage situate detached nearby is my vicarage. These buildings have so been used since 1909...

The trusteeship and ownership of the old schoolhouse had been disputed since 1909, because of the terms and conditions relating to the building in Evetts' original deed. It was through the efforts of the Reverend Sidney Smith (incumbent 1952-1978) that the old Prestwood School House was successfully re-purchased from the Oxford Diocese for the parish:

.....Another notable achievement was the successful re-purchase of Prestwood's old school from the Oxford Diocese. The building has become a focal point for the entire community – with the school in use as a parish hall and the cottage utilised as a meeting point for youngsters.....

Obituary: Reverend Sidney Smith. Bucks Examiner, 6th September 1985

The Reverend Smith had also raised thousands of pounds for church repairs during his time at Prestwood.

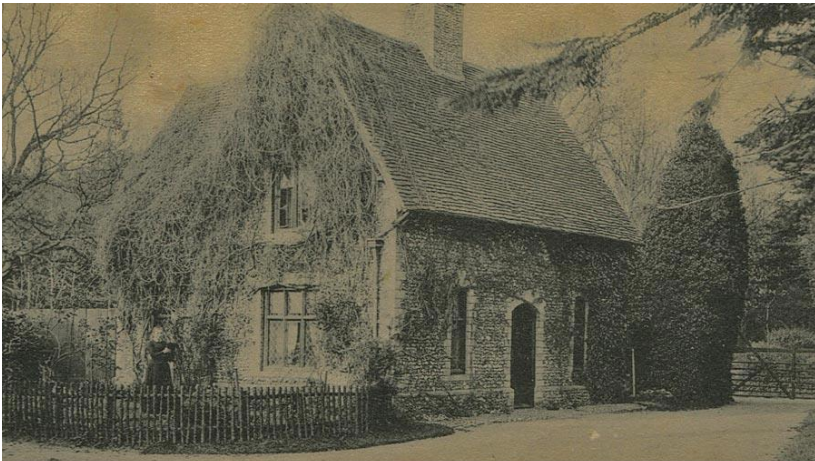
In the latter half of the 20th century and early part of the 21st century the old schoolhouse was used as a playgroup and pre-school facility, thus continuing education for the young in the parish. Today the building is used as a church hall, available to hire for family and social events.

And, as can also be noted from the Reverend Smith's letter of 1957, it appears that the old schoolmaster's house was used as a temporary vicarage until the new one was erected in the 1960s.

The church school had been completed in 1849 and the schoolmaster's house in 1851, at a total cost of £395.



Prestwood Church School: circa : 1900 - 01



PRESTWOOD SCHOOL HOUSE C1906

Old schoolmaster's house now known as the cottage and currently used as offices for church administration.

LIST OF INCUMBENTS

Holy Trinity Church was consecrated by the Lord Bishop of Oxford Samuel Wilberforce on 19th October 1849. The new Ecclesiastical parish of Prestwood was created by Order in Council 5th April 1852.

After a period of closure for refurbishment, the church was re-consecrated by the Bishop of Buckingham Alan Wilson on 13th December 2015.

Vicars of Prestwood

1849 Thomas Evetts
1864 William Wood
1866 Wilfred Thorley Gignac Hunt
1871 John William Boyd
1875 Harry Morland Wells
1893 John William Watney Booth
1903 Allan Mackintosh Maclean
1905 Thomas Wilfred Reynolds
1912 Thomas Edward Peters
1931 Arthur Henry Collins
1939 Harry Fallows
1952 Sidney Frank Smith
Benefice suspended 1978

Priests in Charge

1978 Anthony Robert Wright
1984 Jonathan Roger White

Rectors of Prestwood and Great Hampden

1993 Jonathan White
2003 Mark Mowforth *Priest in Charge*
2008 Deiniol John Owen Heywood

GLOSSARY OF ARCHITECTURAL TERMS USED

Abacus/Abaci: In architecture, an abacus (from the Greek abax meaning slab - the plural abacuses or abaci) is a flat slab forming the uppermost member or division of the capital of the column, above the bell. Its chief function is to provide a large supporting surface, tending to be wider at the capital as an abutment to receive the weight of the arch.

Baptistery: Section of the church, usually at the west end, which is reserved for the administration of baptism and contains the font.

Ball flower: Architectural ornament in the form of a ball inserted in the cup of a flower. The decoration was often used at regular intervals in concave mouldings and was a feature of the decorated period.

Bell-cote: Small framework or arch which contains bells, generally to be found at the west end of the church. The bell-cote can often hold the Sanctus bell that is rung at the consecration of the Eucharist.

Boss: Projecting ornament which is placed at the intersection of ribs in a vault or roof in order to disguise the point at which they join. Bosses are often carved with foliage or figures and overpainted. They are usually made in wood or stone.

Cant strips: A small strip or piece of material, usually bevelled, placed at a point where a roof deck intersects with a parapet wall that rises higher than the roof. Cant strips are used to support roofing material and prevent gaps or voids.

Chamfer: A right angled edge or corner to make a symmetrical sloping edge.

Chancel: Continuation of the nave, most often at the eastern end, which usually contains the altar and is reserved for the clergy and the choir.

Clerestory: Structure formed by continuing the walls of the nave above and away from the roof of an adjoining aisle and adding windows with the purpose of letting more light in to the church.

Corbel: Structural piece of stone or timber which projects from a wall in order to support a beam, an arch or any horizontal feature. Often carved or moulded.

Dripstone: Stone moulding above a doorway, arch or window to throw off rainwater to prevent it running down a wall.

Font: Structure designed to hold the holy water which is used at the sacrament of baptism.

Impost: Moulded upper section of a pillar which carries an arch; a basepoint from which an arch springs/rises.

Nave: Main body of the church in which the congregation sits during services. The area between the chancel and west end.

Piscina: A shallow basin placed near the altar of a church, or in the vestry or sacristy, used for washing the communion vessels. It is often connected to a pipe or drain to dispose of water used sacramentally to the ground.

Pulpit: Raised, enclosed platform reached by steps and used by a preacher from which to deliver sermons. Most are carved in wood. There are some rare stone pulpits.

Rere-arch: Inner arch of a window or doorway which differs from the outside.

Reredos: Decorated screen or wall covering behind the altar.

Respond: Half pier or pillar which is bonded into a wall and designed to carry the springer at one end of an arch.

Soffit: Flat ceiling under a gallery, rood loft etc. Otherwise the underside of an arch.

Splay: Shape of masonry which slopes backwards towards a deep-set window in a thick wall.

Springer: Single block of stone in a wall from which springs the curve of an arch or the rib of a vault.

Tracery: Perforated, ornamental stonework in a window, screen or panelling etc.

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Prestwood Church Census and Map 1850. Ref: 168A/28/1-3. Held at the Buckinghamshire Archives, Aylesbury.

Prestwood National School Logbook 1873-1898 (Photocopy). Ref: E/LB/168a. Held at the Buckinghamshire Archives, Aylesbury.

Prestwood Parish Records-Plans relating to the new church, house and school c1849 (various). Ref: PR 168A/3/1-18. Held at the Buckinghamshire Archives, Aylesbury.

Prestwood Parsonage - listed architectural description online at <https://historicengland.org.uk>

Pictures of the old vicarage, the old church school, the schoolmaster's house and early Holy Trinity reproduced with kind permission of The Prestwood Archive, online at <http://prestwoodarchive.org.uk>

Post 2015 church layout adapted and re-drawn by Jeff Holmes from original re-ordering plans.