

THE CHURCH OF ST. PAUL,
SHIPLEY

A
BRIEF HISTORY
of its 150 years' existence

Message from The Bishop

I congratulate the Parish of St. Paul, Shipley on 150 years of History, and pray that it's life may be strengthened and extended in the years to come.

Ross Bradford

SESQUICENTENARY OF THE CHURCH OF ST. PAUL, SHIPLEY

How it all began

When the year 1800 ushered in a new century, the hamlet of Shipley had a population of about 1400. There was, of course, no railway; and the roads were mere bridle paths and were only two in number, namely the track to Bradford running from Market Place via Shipley Fields, Frizinghall and fields which now form part of Lister Park, to join Manningham Lane: and secondly the track leading to Bingley, which ran along what is now called Saltaire Road (then called Moor End Lane) to join the Bradford/Bingley road at Moor End (now the foot of Moorhead Lane).

Shipley had no church. It was part of the Parish of Bradford and worshippers had to travel on horseback or on foot to the Parish Church of St. Peter in Church Bank.

But both Shipley and Bradford were growing. Bradford had about 40,000 inhabitants, whereas there was only church accommodation for some 6,004 worshippers and for this reason, if for no other, the Vicars of Bradford (the Rev. John Crosse, M.A., 1784–1816 and the Rev. Henry Heap, B.D., 1816–1839) were not averse to their parish being divided by the creation of one or more new parishes. Both vicars were followers and personal friends of the Rev. Charles Simeon of Cambridge, who led the Evangelical Movement at that time sweeping the country. The movement laid emphasis on pastoral care and required its adherent clergy to spend much time visiting parishioners in their homes. This was a further reason for reducing the size of the Parish of Bradford.

Attempts had been made to provide for the worshippers in Shipley, in that occasional services had been held at the home of a Mr. Samuel Denby at Land End, conducted by the Rev. William Morgan, Vicar of Christ Church, Bradford, a church at that time situated at or near the junction of North Parade and Darley Street. Shipley, however, needed its own parish church; and not only for spiritual reasons.

At that time municipal boundaries were based on parish and diocesan boundaries and the local rates (or that part known as the 'poor rate') were levied within the former by the Vestry Meeting. Where there was no parish, there was no vestry meeting and no local rate. This did not mean that Shipley residents paid no rates. It meant that the rate was assessed and collected by officials remote from Shipley, namely the Bradford vestrymen, and, whilst it is true that certain residents of Shipley had a right to attend vestry meetings in Bradford, they must have been in a minority in that assembly. The rate in Shipley in 1803 was 4/6d in the pound and, when one considers the (in our terms) low rateable value of property, it is not surprising to find that the total raised was £310.12s.6d.

Indeed, Shipley was an appendage of Bradford in all matters, both ecclesiastical and secular, and the only official specifically belonging to Shipley township was 'Ye Constable of Shipley', whose staff of office can still be seen at the North end of the Vicar's Warden's pew. The staff has a silver plate inscribed 'Thos. Hill, Constable of Shipley 1778'. A later staff dated 1822 is to be found at the South end of the People's Warden's pew.

There was pressure, therefore, from all sides, for the creation of a Parish of Shipley. But a parish could not exist without a parish church. And all that was required for this purpose was – money! But there was no fund available for the building of a parish church and for (very important) its maintenance. Further, be it

remembered, the country was engaged in a war with Napoleonic France.

With the blessing of peace, following the victory at Waterloo in 1815, the country as a whole began to prosper and to turn its thoughts with relief to spiritual matters.

In 1818 Parliament voted one million pounds for the purpose of building additional churches and appointed Special Commissioners to allocate funds to appropriate areas. The churches built with the aid of these funds are often called 'Waterloo Churches', although they were built to thank God for the blessing of peace rather than to commemorate a victory.

ShIPLEY Parish Church owes its origin to this fund, but a grant was gained only by a hair's breadth; for it was one of the last churches to be awarded a grant before the fund was exhausted. A petition was signed on 20th September 1818 by a number of residents, each promising to subscribe to the cost of the building, and the petition was duly delivered to the Commissioners.

Having secured financial backing, it was necessary to find a site. A benefactor was found in the person of John Milner Field of Heaton, the Lord of the Manor, who donated one acre of ground for the purpose. An acre was, in those days, deemed sufficient for a church and burial ground. A burial ground was then, and still is in some parts of the English speaking world, called 'God's Acre'.

On his death on 11th January 1837, John Milner Field was interred in the crypt under the chancel of the church where his remains still rest, the only person to be buried within the fabric of the church. A memorial plaque is to be seen on the wall on the epistle side of the East end of the church above the credence alcove.

The Commissioners appointed Mr. J. Oates of Halifax, architect for the Commissioners for many churches in the West Riding, to draw up plans for a Gothic style church at a cost of £7,687.19s.3d.

The foundation stone was laid on 5th November 1823 by the Rev. Henry Heap, B.D., Vicar of Bradford. The trowel used in the laying is still in the possession of the church.

The building of the church took exactly three years and the completed building was consecrated and dedicated to St. Paul on the afternoon of 1st November 1826 by the Most. Rev. Dr. Edward Harcourt, Archbishop of York. In the morning he had already consecrated Wilsden Parish Church (recently demolished) which had been built out of a grant of the same fund and on the same plans. After taking lunch with Mr. William Busfield at St. Ives, the Archbishop was met at the boundary of the new parish by a number of parishioners and conducted to the church. A printed copy of the sermon is still in the possession of the church.

The outside of the building is much the same today as it was at that time, save that then there was no clock.

The interior was designed to accommodate 1488 persons, the approximate number of parishioners at that date, but many more were expected to attend the consecration. For this reason a temporary platform was built at about the place where the present baptistry is located. At the end of the service this platform collapsed, causing much alarm. Fortunately, this quickly subsided when it was found that nobody had been injured.

A church having been established, it still remained to have a parish legally constituted. In the meantime, the Vicar of Bradford was responsible for services and he delegated this duty to one of his assistant curates, the Rev. Richard Horsfall, who is described in contemporary records as 'Assistant Minister for Shipley'.

As already stated, the church was designed to accommodate 1488 people. The

pews were of a type known as 'box pews', having high sides and (later) curtains and a door. The sockets, now filled with cement, which supported these pews can still be seen on the pillars. Most of the pews were rented by families, thus providing a useful supplement to church funds. There were, however, 332 'free' pews for the use of those who had no rented place. Pew rents were abolished on 1st January 1924.

There was no organ. Musical accompaniment was supplied by flutes, violins and violincellos.

There were no choir stalls, but there was a 'singing pew' in the West Gallery (over what is now the Narthex) in which a small mixed choir led the singing.

Six bells had been hung in the bell tower, the largest of which (now the 7th bell) is inscribed 'These bells were purchased by subscription for St. Paul's Church, Shipley, in the Parish of Bradford. The Rev. Henry Heap, M.A., Vicar of the Parish of Bradford, Domestic Chaplain to the Rt. Hon. Lord Howard; John Hodgson, Esq., Warden; Thos. Wright, Esq.; Mr. John Wright and Mr. Jonas Bradley, Committee'. The bells were cast by Messrs. Mears & Stainbeck of Whitechapel, London.

All windows were of plain glass and all woodwork was of painted deal.

The Rev. Henry Heap presented a communion set and service books.

Services were held on Sunday mornings and afternoons only, as there was no artificial lighting. When required, candles were placed in the pulpit to enable the preacher to read his notes, but the pews were not illuminated and, we are told, the congregation often went to sleep. FIAT LUX!

The first vestry meeting was held at Easter 1828 when a Mr. Thomas Bishells was elected churchwarden. This was an important office as it carried municipal as well as ecclesiastical duties. A further vestry meeting was held in May of the same year, at which Mr. Bishell's appointment was confirmed and Mr. John Hodgson was 'elected' (surely 'confirmed') as 'Minister's Churchwarden'.

The two wardens went to work immediately and provided 'a vestry table, chairs, fender and communion cloth and cushions for the pulpit'. They also arranged for a bellringer to teach some of the congregation how to ring and, on the death of the Duke of York, purchased black cloth with which to drape the pulpit. The funds were provided by the churchwardens out of their own pockets for, at that time, there was no fund for such purposes, as the parish had, as yet, no legal entity.

On 30th May 1828 King George IV signed an Order in Council assigning a district to the new church and defining its boundaries. The parish was now legally established, not only ecclesiastically, but municipally, as the Parish of Shipley-cum-Heaton and a few months later the Rev. Thomas Newberry, M.A. was appointed incumbent.

The Rev. John Crosse, Vicar of Bradford, had died in 1816, having by his will bequeathed the sum of £300 to establish a fund for payment of a vicar's stipend for the incumbent of Shipley, if and when a parish was established. Grants were received from government funds, the Diocese of Ripon, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and other sources. In addition to this, pew rents were assigned to the incumbent and these were supplemented by fees for marriages and burials. An earlier chronicler comments that these last mentioned emoluments did not amount to much, as few were married more than once and certainly no one was buried twice.

A residence was built for the vicar in 1848 at a cost of £500, one hundred pounds having been given by a Miss Horsfall and the balance raised by a bazaar in the Oddfellows Hall. The house was small, and had to be enlarged in 1854 and

again in 1883. In 1898 it was demolished on the recommendation of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners as being below the required standard, and the vicar, the Rev. A.W. Cribb, had to live in rented accommodation at Shipley Fields Hall until 1907 when the present vicarage was built. It is of interest to note that part of Shipley Fields Hall is now the vicarage of St. Margaret's, Frizinghall.

In 1828 or 1829 an organ was installed in the West Gallery.

In 1858 or 1859 the East Window received its stained glass, executed by a Mr. Barnett of Leith, Edinburgh, the cost being borne by various families as memorials to deceased relatives. A number of stained glass windows were also provided for the North and South aisles by the Peel, Cockshott, Wilson and Wilkinson families.

The original plans had provided for a clock on the bell tower, but through lack of funds this was omitted in the building of the church. In 1867, however, a clock was installed at a cost of £300, raised by subscription, and was set in motion on the 29th June in that year.

The original six bells were supplemented in 1867 by the addition of a tenor and a treble, the gift of Mr. John Wright of Hirst Wood, having been cast by the same firm which made the original bells.

The year 1876 would be the Jubilee Year of the church and a scheme of renovation and improvement was put in hand before that year. In 1875 the old box pews were removed and replaced by the present oak pews. The West Gallery and the East end of the North Gallery were removed and the present carved oak facings placed on both the North and the South Galleries and the side walls of the church were boarded to sill-level with pitch pine. The chancel was extended to make way for the choir and its floor was tiled. The present pulpit and the carved Caen stone chancel screen were erected and at the same time the eagle lectern was given by Mrs. Mason and the alabaster font by Mr. Fox.

The East end of the North Gallery had been removed to accommodate the organ, which was removed from the West Gallery. A new organ was installed and dedicated in 1892.

The original site of one acre having proved insufficient to provide adequate burial facilities, a further acre was added in 1860 and consecrated by the Bishop of Ripon on 4th August in that year. Both graveyards were closed by Order in Council dated 26th February and no further graves were permitted to be made after 30th June 1881. Six acres of land were purchased at Hirst Wood and were consecrated by the Bishop of Ripon on 17th August 1895.

The porch of the church was panelled in oak in 1889 as a memorial to Richard Clairborne Dixon and the West end of the church as a memorial to Edwin and Sarah Ann Lee in 1908.

The lectern stand, credence table, an alms dish and the font ewer, churchwardens' wands and other ornaments were presented in 1892 by various congregation members and in 1921 the reredos was presented by Mrs. Sutcliffe in memory of her son Lt. C.G.F. Sutcliffe and other members of her family. In the latter year the altar cross, frontals and vases for the recently erected War Memorial were provided by various parishioners.

On 7th January 1865 an Order in Council had separated Heaton from Shipley and the Parish Church of Heaton St. Barnabas was erected. But even after the separation of Heaton, the parish became too large and on 1st March 1894 St. Peter's Church Hall was opened, where services were held each Sunday and Thursday evenings, usually conducted by the assistant curate. On 1st June 1909 the Church of St. Peter was consecrated and a new parish came into being.

The centenary of our church's consecration occurred on 1st November 1926 and an evening service was held, heralded by 'a quarter peal of Double Norwich Court Bob Major of 1,280 changes' on the bells, which was rung in 47 minutes by the bell-ringers of Shipley assisted by one from Bradford and one from Idle. On the following Saturday a peal of Grandsire Triples, involving 5,040 changes was rung in 3 hours 4 minutes.

The centenary, of course, spurred the faithful congregation to further efforts on renovation and improvement. The church had been lit by gas for a number of years and the relatively new electric lighting was installed in its stead at the expense of a parishioner (Mr. Akam). A new heating system was also installed, and, electric current now being available, the organ was provided with an electric motor to work the bellows.

The roof was reslated and repairs made to the windows.

The choir vestry was enlarged and the entire church interior was redecorated. The sanctuary was panelled in memory of Thomas Ashenhurst and the parents of Margaret Hodgson.

Towards the Second Century

In 1927 a side-chapel (sometimes called 'the Lady Chapel') was erected in memory of the Rev. A.W. Cribb, Vicar of Shipley from 1890 to 1914 and the only vicar to die in office. A plaque on the pillar to the present baptistry records that this side-chapel was erected by subscription of the parishioners of the Parishes of St. Paul and St. Peter.

In 1929 a screen to divide the side-chapel from the chancel was provided in memory of Lt. Wm. Morgan and a screen between the side-chapel and the South aisle was given in memory of Jane Elizabeth Ashenhurst in 1932.

The clock installed in 1867 having become unreliable, a new clock was provided by Shipley Urban District Council and was dedicated on 31st December 1935 by the Rev. E.B. Alban, then Vicar of Shipley, in the presence of the Chairman and Members of the Council. After the service the Church Council members were entertained to refreshment in the Town Hall. The present clock remains the property of the local authority (now the City of Bradford Metropolitan District) and is kept on repair and adjustment by the council. The new clock was placed at a higher level than the original clock and the position of the latter can still be seen on the four faces of the bell tower.

There followed a series of gifts of church furniture, furnishings and ornaments too numerous to list in this short history, including two new wardens' wands, the gift of the wardens of that time (1950).

In anticipation of the sesquicentenary a programme of re-ordering of the interior of the church building was commenced in 1970 to the design and under the supervision of Mr. C.B. Martindale, architect.

At the West end of the church several rows of pews were removed and a wooden screen with glass panels was erected, thus forming a 'narthex' or inner porch of sufficient size to enable it to be used for meetings, both formal and informal, of the congregation. The framework of the screen and its doors were skilfully made from the wood of the pews removed. A false ceiling and double-glazing of the windows ensures a warm atmosphere and the former could, perhaps, at some time in the future form the base for a choir gallery, thus returning the choir to its original position of the days of the 'singing pew'. At the same time a kitchen was made on the

North West side of the porch and new toilet facilities were provided on the South West side. The stairway leading to the bell tower was modified.

The side chapel erected in 1927 was removed and its screen used as part of the Narthex screen and the site of the side-chapel is now a baptistry, the font having been brought from the West door and placed in a central position in the area.

Undoubtedly the most important change to be made was the re-ordering of the chancel to accommodate a nave altar. The altar was made from the wood recovered from discarded pews and stands on a slightly raised sanctuary with curved communion rail. A figured cloth was made and presented to the church by the Mothers' Union and the altar was dedicated by the Rt. Rev. Michael Parker, M.A., the Lord Bishop of Bradford on the 25th January 1971, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul.

In 1971 four silver chalices which had become unserviceable were melted down and the metal used to make two new chalices, a ciborium and two well patens in memory of Elizabeth Stansfield and an alms dish was given by Mrs. Beryl Hardcastle in memory of the late William Ernest Hardcastle and George Donald Hardcastle, both former churchwardens.

Subsequently the choir stalls were provided with 24 brass lamps in the form of candlesticks with red shades and the ceiling lights were removed and their sockets filled and levelled.

On 26th June 1976 the church building was included by the Department of the Environment in the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest under Part IV of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

VICARS OF SHIPLEY

- 1828—1845 Rev. Thos. Newberry. He left Shipley for the rectory of Hinton, Somerset, where he died in March 1861.
- 1845—1884 Rev. Wm. Kelly, M.A.' was Vicar for 38 years. An Irishman educated at Trinity College, Dublin, he was ordained in 1842, after which he served as assistant curate at Thornton.
- 1884—1890 Rev. Wm. Pearson. In 1890 he became Vicar of St. Matthew's, Bolton and in 1894 Rector of Spofforth.
- 1890—1914 Rev. Arthur Wm. Cribb. He served as a missionary after ordination in China and, on his return, became assistant curate in Leicestershire and later at St. Mary's, Whitechapel. He came to Shipley from the living of St. Thomas', Stepney and died on 3rd June 1914 at Shipley. It was during his incumbency that St. Peter's became a parish, the Hirst Wood Burial Ground was acquired and the present vicarage was built.
- 1914—1918 Rev. Bernard Herklots, M.A. He spent 3 years in India and, on his return became assistant curate at St. Paul's, Canterbury. He later returned to India and then accepted curacies at Trowbridge and Carlisle after which he became Vicar of St. Thomas', Kendal. In 1918 he left Shipley to take the living of St. George's, Leeds and later became Vicar of St. John's, Wimborne and Rector of Poole, Dorset.
- 1918—1930 Rev. N.H. Harding Jolly, M.A. A graduate of Queen's College, Cambridge, he took an honours degree in Theology in 1904. The first years of his ministry were spent at Burnley, where he was curate to the Bishop of Burnley. His father had been Vicar of Thornton for 16 years, and he therefore welcomed an invitation to return to West Yorkshire as Vicar of Shipley. In 1930 he left Shipley to become the Vicar of Herne Bay and later became Vicar of High Hurstwood and Aldingbourne, Sussex and was made an honorary canon of Chichester.
- 1930—1936 Rev. Evan Basil Alban, formerly Vicar of Oughtibridge, came to Shipley from the Parish of St. Luke, Birmingham. He is remembered as a powerful preacher. He left Shipley to become Rector of Christ Church, West Didsbury but shortly returned to this part of the country to be Vicar of Ben Rhydding until he retired in 1947 through ill-health.
- 1936—1954 Rev. Wm. John Perrett, became Vicar of Shipley after a lengthy assistant curacy at Mossley Hill, Liverpool and being subsequently Vicar of St. Andrew's, Huddersfield. He nursed the Parish during the difficult days of the Second World War, when many promising young parishioners were lost, not only through casualties, but also from emigration to other areas. He took on the work of Hon. Secretary to the Diocesan Board of Finance and his placing on a sound footing of the parish finances is remembered by those who knew him. His skill as a teacher (he had been a schoolmaster) and his diligent visiting of the sick and distressed will ever be remembered. Canon Perrett retired in 1954 and lived first in Worthing and later in Canterbury until his death in 1975.
- 1954—1964 Rev. John Keys Fraser was a young and enthusiastic vicar of great

1964—

organising ability. He organised, or inspired, several Church Army Missions, teaching weeks and conventions and an intensive stewardship campaign. He is now Vicar of Scarborough.

Rev. Philip Harry Green came to the Parish of Shipley in October 1964, after being assistant curate at Keighley, then Vicar of St. Saviour, Everton and Vicar of Barnoldswick-with-Bracewell from 1956, during which latter incumbency he was involved in the complicated and troublesome travails of replacement of the Parish Church to a new site. For further report on our Vicar, the reader must await our Bicentenary Booklet.

ROLL OF ASSISTANT CURATES

1830–1831	J. Brayshaw
1831–1837	William Cooper
1832–1840	Edward Smith
1860–1864	Henry A. Mitton
1863–1865	A.C. Risk
1868–1873	Joseph Scott
1874–1878	Chas. Strong
1879–	Nassau Clark
1880–1884	John E. Jones
1885–1887	J.F. Longrigg
1886–1888	A. Middleton
1886–1887	T. Duckett
1887–1889	W.G. Howard
1888–1895	W. Ferens
1889–1890	E.B. Smith
1890–1894	J. Priestley
1894–1905	C. Owen French
1900–1901	Henry L. Penzer
1902–1906	W. Spencer
1906–1908	A.R. Steggall
1908–1910	D. Davies
1908–1917	W. Bowker
1915–1916	J.R. Southwell
1917–1918	J.C. Hirst
1918–1920	T. Chadwick
1920–1921	J.A. Pearson
1922–	H. Clapham
1923–1927	P. Sowerby
1927–1929	J.W. Reddihough
1931–1935	H.V. Slingsby
1935–1937	L.L. Thomas
1937–1939	J. Edwards
1940–1943	C.C. Peake
1943–1945	A.P. Lumley
1946–1949	D. Burnett
1949–1952	K.M. Keeley
1958–1961	J.A.G. Scott
1961–1965	I.T. Shield
1965–1967	L.G. Higdon
1967–1970	R. Sharp
1975–	K.M. Wray

ROLL OF CHURCHWARDENS

	Vicar's		People's
1828—	Thos. Bishells		John Hodgson
1828—1890		No records	
1890—1891	H.G.T. Moss		Frederick Ives
1891—1892	Abraham Thresh		Frederick Ives
1892—1895	Edmund Pullan		Dr. W.H. Ellis
1895—1898	Edmund Pullan		J.S. Watts
1898—1903	Henry Ayrton		Wheatley Jackson
1903—1906	Wm. Brown		Wm. Morgan
1906—1908	W. Miller		John Stell
1908—1910	Wm. Thos. Croft		Francis Lister
1910—1911	Wm. Thos. Croft		Albert E. Horne
1911—1913	F.C.M.S. Rhodes		Albert E. Horne
1913—1916	F.C.M.S. Rhodes		James H. Thompson
1916—1919	Wm. Stockdale		Herbert Stell
1919—1920	C.E. Horncastle		Sam. N. Dibb
1920—1921	T.H. Cockshott		Herbert Stell
1922—1925	M. Akam		Albert E. Horne
1925—1932	Wm. Stockdale		Albert E. Horne
1932—1933	Albert E. Horne		E. Wilkinson
1933—1938	E. Wilkinson		S.I. Dibb
1938—1940	S.I. Dibb		M. Fielding
1940—1944	S.I. Dibb		S. Hainsworth
1944—1945	E. Wilkinson		S. Hainsworth
1945—1947	E. Wilkinson		W.E. Hardcastle
1947—1948	E. Wilkinson		T.W. Warburton
1948—1950	T.W. Warburton		C.F. Cockshott
1950—1951	C.F. Cockshott		F.L. Pitts
1951—1952	C.F. Cockshott		A.F. Lawes
1952—1953	F.L. Pitts		A.F. Lawes
1953—1956	H. Hanson		A.E. Brown
1956—1959	H. Hanson		E. Wilkinson
1959—1961	H. Hanson		G.D. Hardcastle
1961—1964	S.D. Eade		G.D. Hardcastle
1964—1966	G.D. Hardcastle		R.R. Ruffe
1966—1971	C.F. Cockshott		R.R. Ruffe
1971—1975	R.A. Burrows		J.K. Armstrong
1975—1976	R.A. Burrows		F.I. Clough
1976—	C.F. Cockshott		F.I. Clough