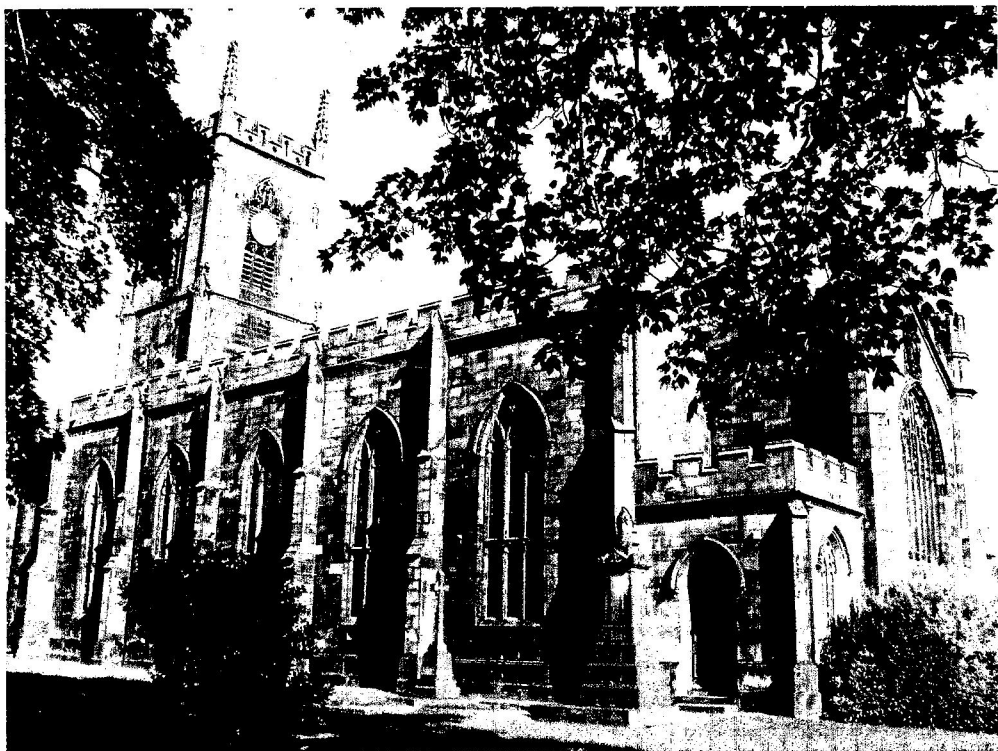


THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST PAUL, SHIPLEY



A short history and guide

HISTORY

There was a settlement at Shipley before the Norman Conquest. An entry in William the Conqueror's Domesday Book records:-

"In Scipleia, Ravenchil had three carucates (about 300 acres) of land to be taxed where there may be two ploughs. Ilbert has it, and it is waste. Value in King Edward's time, ten shillings. There is a wood pasture half a mile long and half a mile broad."

This drop in value after the Norman invasion of England was no doubt due to William's infamous 'harrying of the North'.

By the 14th century the Manor of Shipley was owned by the Order of the Knights of St John (founded in connection with the great crusades of the middle ages).

Passing through a number of owners, the manor finally came into the ownership of John Milner Field, of Heaton Hall, whose daughter married the Earl of Rosse. Mr Field is the only person to be buried in the Rosse Vault underneath the church.

In 1800 the hamlet of Shipley had a population of about 1,400, and the two roads running through it were only bridle paths. One led to Bradford, starting from the market place, via Shipley Fields, Frizinghall and what is now Lister Park, to join Manningham Lane. The other led to Bingley via Saltaire Road (then called Moor End Lane) joining the present Bradford/Bingley road at Moor End (where the Saltaire roundabout is now).

At that time Shipley had no Anglican church. It was part of the Parish of Bradford, and worshippers had to travel all the way to St Peter's Church (which is now Bradford Cathedral) on horseback or on foot. The canal was only opened in 1823, and the Leeds-Bradford railway line, including Shipley station, not until 1846. Occasional services had been held in a private house, but Shipley needed its own parish church.

THE CHURCH

In 1815 the battle of Waterloo brought an end to the Napoleonic wars, and Parliament voted one million pounds for the building of churches as a thanksgiving for the coming of peace.

The Lord of the Manor, John Milner Field, donated one acre of ground – this was the traditional amount of land for a church and burial ground, and in some parts of England a burial ground is still called "God's Acre".

The architect, Mr J Oates, drew up plans for the 'Gothic style church' at a cost of £7,687.19.3d. and the foundation stone was laid on 5 November 1823 by the Vicar of Bradford. The building took three years to build, and was consecrated and dedicated to St Paul on 1 November 1826 (All Saints Day) in the reign of King George IV by the Archbishop of York.

The interior of the church was designed to accommodate 1488 people. The original seating was in high-sided box pews, the sockets for which can still be seen on the pillars. Most of these were rented, a useful supplement to church funds, but there were 332 'free' pews. Until 1828, when an organ was installed, musical accompaniment was by flutes, violins etc. A small choir led the singing from the West Gallery. The windows were plain glass and the woodwork painted deal. As there was no artificial lighting, services were held on Sunday mornings and afternoons only. When required, candles were placed in the pulpit to enable the preacher to read his notes, but the pews were not illuminated and it was not unknown for members of the congregation to nod off.

On 30 May 1828, Shipley-cum-Heaton became a legal parish with its own Council, but the parish had become too large by 1865 and Heaton became a separate parish. By 1894 Shipley parish had once again grown too large, and in 1909 the church of St Peter was consecrated and a new parish came into being in Nab Wood.

The Jubilee in 1876 saw extensive renovations to St Paul's. The box pews were removed and replaced by the present ones. The chancel was extended to take the choir, the galleries were altered and given their present carved oak facings and a pulpit and chancel screen erected. The eagle lectern and alabaster font were presented by parishioners. In 1892 the fine Binns organ was installed (see separate leaflet), the reredos (behind the high altar) was installed in 1921 and electric lights replaced the gas ones in 1926.

The next major change took place in 1970, with a re-ordering of the interior. Several pews were removed from the West end and a narthex formed to use for formal and informal meetings. The 1927 side chapel was removed and the font installed there to form a baptistry. Pews were removed from the front of the church and a pavement and nave altar installed. At the same time the kitchen and lavatories were installed.

In 1976 the church 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.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Stained Glass

East window 1859 by Barrett of Leith. Main lights show Jesus (centre) and six apostles. The other six, plus St Paul, are at present hidden by the reredos. Between them are scenes from the Life of Christ.

Glass in the North and South aisles date from 1869 to 1900.

Organ

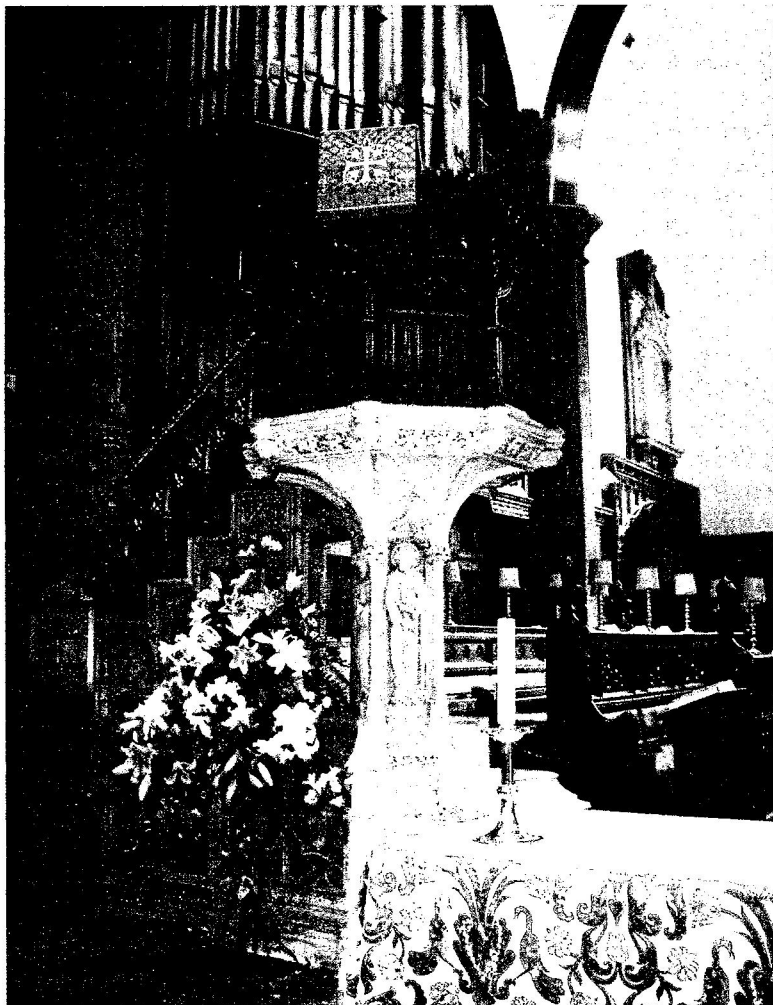
The present Binns organ was built in 1892. It is a fine three-manual instrument with over 30 speaking stops. It was rebuilt in 1926 and

completely restored and rebuilt in 1982 to its original specification. It is at present undergoing a major refurbishment. There is a separate leaflet giving more information about this.



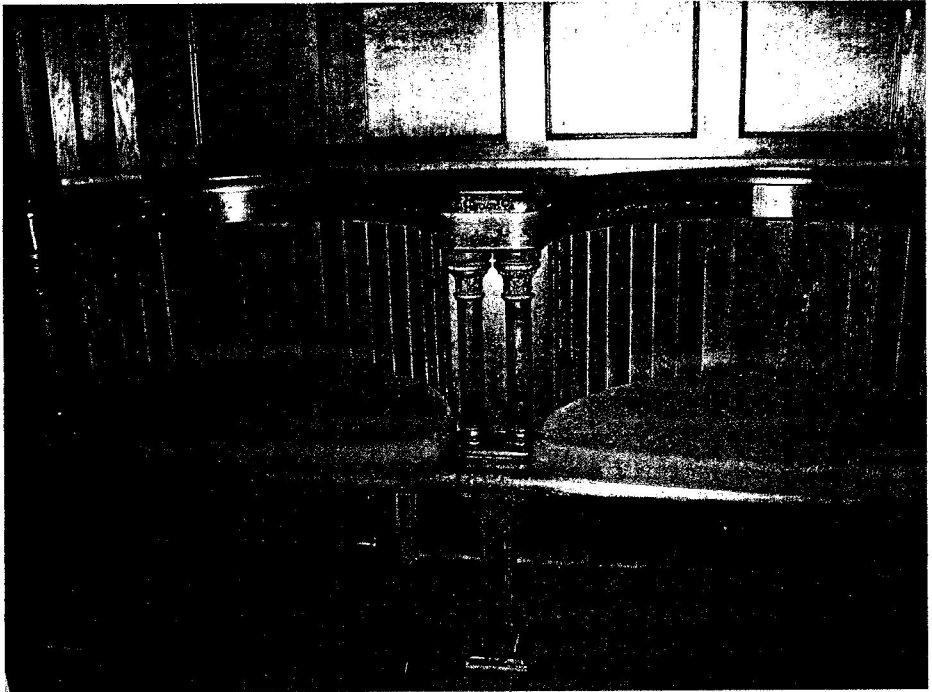
Pulpit

The high pulpit was probably necessary when the galleries were in regular use. It is rarely used now, clergy preferring to preach from a less elevated position!



Wardens' Seats

These seats, which were behind the rear pews until the Narthex was constructed, gave the Wardens a raised vantage point to keep a watch on the congregation.



Shipley Constable's Staff

Parish Constables were elected on an annual basis and were responsible for keeping order before the establishment of a regular police force. The staff illustrated is dated 1822. It may well have been carried during an incident in that year when the local constables tried to

protect a power loom which was being delivered to a mill in Shipley from angry weavers who were afraid of losing their jobs. The constables were forced to seek safety in flight, and the loom was destroyed. However the weavers' triumph was short-lived and the machines were generally adopted.



Royal Coat of Arms

This can be seen on the West wall of the church, above the Narthex. Origin unknown, but it appears to date from between 1801 and 1816.

Bells

Six bells were installed in 1862 and paid for by subscription of the parishioners. Cast by Mears & Stainbeck of Whitechapel, London. In 1867 the tenor and treble were added, a gift of John Wright and cast by the same foundry as the first six. The last recorded peal was rung in 1938, and following the discovery of cracks in the tower walls the bells have not been rung, but are still chimed for weddings, using a mechanical system. Two of the peal boards from the ringing chamber have been brought down and can be seen in the porch.

Clock

The first clock was installed in 1867. In 1935, having become unreliable, it was removed, and a new clock was provided by Shipley Urban District Council. The new clock was placed at a higher level than the original, and the position of the latter can still be seen on the four faces of the bell tower.

Memorial Tablets

In the Narthex there is a brass tablet in memory of three Shipley men killed in the South African (Boer) War in 1901.

THE VICARAGE

The large house to the east of the church used to be the Vicarage – the second on this site, built in 1907 to accommodate the Vicar's large family.

The present Vicarage is located in a part of Shipley which is just outside the parish.

THE GRAVEYARDS

The original one-acre graveyard was increased by the addition of a further acre in 1860. Both these graveyards, being full, were closed by Order in Council in February 1881 and no new graves were permitted to be made after June that year. Six acres of land for a new graveyard were purchased in Hirst Wood and consecrated on 17 August 1895.

The original graveyard was levelled in the mid 19th century and its upkeep is now the responsibility of Bradford Council. There is a war grave against the boundary wall between the church and the old Vicarage.

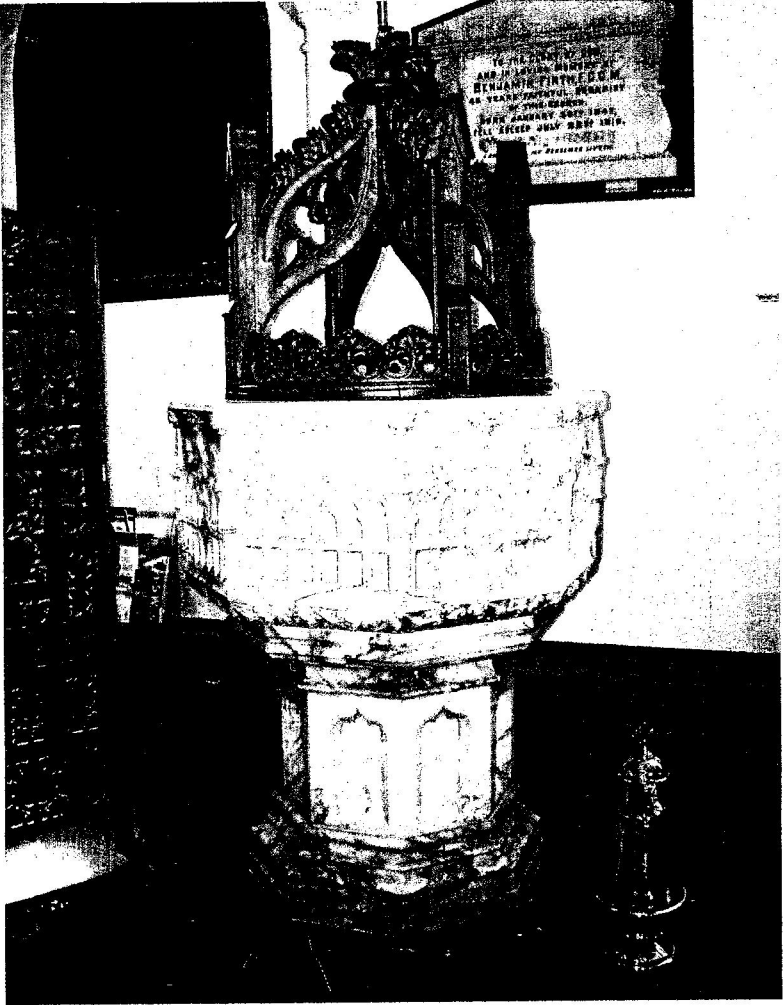
WORSHIP AT ST PAUL'S TODAY

Many people have worshipped God at St Paul's during its history and that worship continues today. St Paul's Church is a thriving Christian community which includes all ages and all backgrounds. We particularly welcome children and try to cater for them as well. All are welcome – to come for a 'taster' or to join us regularly. Why not come along sometime?

Source material:

- 'Illustrated Handbook with an Historical Account of The Parish Church (St. Paul) Shipley' (1926)
- 'The Church of St Paul, Shipley – a Brief History of its 150 years' existence' (1976)

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AND
ST. MARY'S
IN
1887

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Written and produced by Mrs Penny Woode
in 2010