

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, ST. MARYLEBONE

Compiled by Mr. E.G. Steel, mainly from notes left by Mr. R. F. Hunger, who was Parish Clerk for 45 years, and Churchwarden for four years.

Two hundred years ago, St. Marylebone was a pleasant rural district served by a single parish church.

In 1772, however, Portland Place was built, and by 1793 Clipstone, Bolsover and Great Titchfield Streets were added; it became obvious that the old parish church could not meet the spiritual needs of the still growing neighbourhood. Steps were therefore taken to split the crowded parish. In 1821 an Act of Parliament provided up to the sum of £1,000,000 for the building of additional churches (Waterloo churches) "to promote the established religion of the country and improve the morals of all orders of society," and as a thank offering for the deliverance of the country from invasion by Napoleon; thus Holy Trinity came into being.

The site of the church, on the corner of Albany Street and Osnaburgh Street, overlapped the parish of St. Pancras, so it was necessary to pass a further Act of Parliament in 1827, declaring the whole of the site to be now within the parish of St. Marylebone. The two additional strips of land thus added were the property of the Crown, and at the royal pleasure of King George IV. were given to the church "for improving the appearance of the same," the Crown becoming the patron of the living.

There is a picture in the vestry given by Miss Pye, for many years a generous contributor to the schools of the parish, which shows the site before the church was built, with Primrose Hill in the distance, and in the foreground a cowshed and a popular tea-garden.

Architect

The architect of the church was Sir John Soane, who designed the Bank of England building. He prepared a design which he estimated would cost about £27,000 to build, but the Church Commissioners would only sanction the expenditure of £20,000. Hence it became necessary for the original and better design for the church to be modified, and by lowering the steeple by 15 feet, omitting certain columns and pilasters at the east end, and constructing part of the exterior of brick instead of stone, the cost was reduced. The actual amount expended was about £16,000, and the church was completed and consecrated on May 31, 1828.

In the Soane's Museum at Lincoln's Inn Fields is a drawing showing three of his designs for the church, all inferior to that of the existing church.

Fabric

The church is built mainly of Bath stone, the side walls being of brick. The original plan for the east and west ends of the church to be identical in design was nullified in 1878, when the chancel apse was added to the design of G. Somers Clarke, the cost being defrayed from a bequest of £1,000 by Mr. Henry Tritton, who also gave the Clergy House.

The portico in front of the church has four Ionic columns and a balustrade at the top. The pilasters on the exterior side walls of the church are also Ionic. On the right of the portico is a memorial to

those who fell in the 1914-18 war. Given by Mrs. Walter Sykes in memory of her son, Lieutenant Douglas Collett Sykes, M.C., it was designed by Sir Mervyn Macartney, and dedicated on November 11, 1920. The Memorial takes the form of a tablet of Sicilian marble, bearing the names of 138 men of the parish who died during the first World War. The parish Memorial took the form of a contribution of £700 towards the work of the Church Missionary Society, and this is recorded on the pediment of the right hand pillar of the chancel arch. A further memorial is a window in the chancel apse given by Sir James and Lady Boyton in memory of their son, Lieutenant Henry James Boyton.

The tower, a well known landmark in the neighbourhood, is in two stages, the lower one of eight Corinthian columns and a clock, and the upper one a circular peristyle of eight columns. The tower has been likened to the "Tower of the Winds" at Athens, but was probably inspired by the twin towers of Robert Adam's church at Mistle, as was also the tower of another of Sir John Soane's churches, St. Peter's, Walworth. The first Rector, the Rev. G. S. Penfold, collected £1,200 to improve the lower part of the tower, and the balustrade to the roof was completed by the sixth Rector, the Rev. E. Grose Hodge.

A gallery extends all round the church except at the chancel. There is seating accommodation for about 1,300.

The window in the S.E. corner of the church was erected to the memory of Henry St. George Tucker who died on the 14th June, 1851. The son of Henry Tucker, President of the Bermuda Council, he was born in Bermuda on 15th February, 1771. At the age of 15 he went to India, joined the Indian Civil Service and ultimately became Accountant General and Financial Secretary to the Bengal Government. Returning to England on retirement he joined the East India Company and served for two terms as Chairman. He lived for the last thirty years of his life in Portland Place.

Exterior

During the incumbency of the Rev. A. J. Robinson, the fifth Rector, trees were planted in the church grounds and the creeper on the walls. At this time work was commenced on the outdoor pulpit which, together with the baptistery and its stained glass window, was given in memory of Canon W. Cadman, the fourth Rector, in 1893.

The sixth Rector, the Rev. E. Gross Hodge, added the flower beds, and altogether the churchyard was kept in excellent condition until the removal of the iron railings for scrap during the last war.

Chancel

As has already been mentioned, the chancel apse was added at the end of the church in 1878, and a tablet on the pediment of the left hand pillar records that the chancel was built, consecrated, furnished and the church restored and partially re-seated in the years 1878 to 1884 during the incumbency of Canon W. Cadman. The reredos is of marble in the Italian style, and was given by Miss Pye. The altar, the gift of the Misses Janvrin in 1892, is made of cedar of Lebanon, olive, ebony, lime and American walnut woods. The painted panels of angels which adorn the walls were given by Miss Frere in memory of Mrs. Temple Frere in 1899, and the opus sectile panels have been given by various donors as follows:

St. Matthew.....given by the congregation
St. Mark.....given by Miss Barron
St. Luke.....given by Miss Barron

St. John.....given by Miss Tatlock
The Nativity.....given by Mr. F. Gaskell
The Last Supper.....given by Misses Holdsworth Hunt
The Resurrection.....given by Misses Holdsworth Hunt and Miss Tatlock

The Communion plate now in use was the gift of Mrs. Vesey Norman.

Chapel

The chapel, occupying the end of the aisle, was given by Mr. and Mrs. Southwell Jones in memory of their son, 2nd Lieutenant Louis Southwell Gueret Jones. Like the War Memorial in the portico, it was designed by Sir Mervyn Macartney, and was dedicated on April 28, 1920 by the Rev. Lionel Ford, M.A., Headmaster of Harrow. There is an endowment of £500 in the hands of trustees provided by Mrs. M. A. B. Cresswell in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Southwell Jones.

The ceiling of the chapel is copied from that of Sir John Soane's house in Lincoln's Inn Fields (now the Soane's Museum) and the screen from the library in Napoleon's Chateau de la Malmaison. The altar is copied from that of one of the City churches, and the reredos from Mantegna's fresco of the Gonzala family.

One of the stained glass windows represents Fortitude (Centre), Study and Sport, with Harrow School in the background, and was also given in memory of 2nd Lieutenant Jones. The other represents Law (centre), Prudence and Justice, with the White House, Washington, in the background, and was given in memory of Thomas Bridgwater Jones, Counselor at Law, New York, brother of Mr. Southwell Jones, who died in France while serving with the American Y.M.C.A.

The schools were first established in 1835 on a site in Cleveland and Greenwell Streets where Flaxman the sculptor had had his workshop. The first headmaster was Mr. Lamb who lived at No. 7 Greenwell Street, and the headmistress was Miss Hall. The regulations for the conduct of the schools provide that they are "to give religious instruction according to the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England together with a good secular education," and that "prayers from the Liturgy of the Church of England are to be read daily at the commencement and breaking up of the School." One of the regulations also states that "no child is to be admitted who has not had the Small Pox or been vaccinated."

In 1905 the London County Council made an inspected of the non-provided schools under their jurisdiction, and Trinity School was condemned as being unsuitable structurally for the purposes of elementary education. Part of the premises are now used as the Club House.

Crypt

The vaults below the church are very strongly built of brick. Burials (95 in all) were made in the crypt up to 1843, the first part of the Burial Service being said in the lobby of the church. No further interments were made after that date, as an Act of Parliament had forbidden burials to "take place in populous places."

Organ

The organ, one of the finest in London, was built in 1828 by Bishop and Son and originally stood in the gallery at the back of the church. The same firm rebuilt and moved it to the chancel in 1876. In

1902 it was again rebuilt by Vincent and Co., when the detached console was added. In 1929 cleaning and renovation took place and a large Diapason was added by Rushworth and Dreaper, Ltd.

Then Dr. A. G. Phear, a physician, who used the organ for practice, began his many and generous benefactions. In 1931 he presented a new Tromba and Stopped Diapason and followed this with the Diapasons and Mutations from the fine Schulze organ which stood in Charterhouse School Chapel, Godalming, and which was being dismantled. He crowned his gifts by adding, at great expense, the whole of the Schulze Swell organ which was erected in its present position in 1939. This section was removed to the crypt for safety during the war.

Organists of the church have included Dr. Hugh Blair, Mr. Eric Warr, Mr. Sidney Newman and Mr. Leonard Blake. Since 1929 the post has been held by Mr. William Tubbs, and he has given regular series of recitals.

Charities

A sum of £400 was left by the Rev. G. S. Penfold, the first Rector, to provide clothing for 12 poor persons each year, a sum of £200 by Captain Sykes to provide bread for poor parishioners on January 1st every year, and a further sum of £450 by Henry Milnes Rait, the interest on which was to be distributed annually among the poor.

Rectors

There have been ten Rectors of Holy Trinity since the parish was formed.

The first was the Rev. George Saxby Penfold, D.D., 1828 to 1846. He was buried in the crypt, and a memorial tablet to him will be found on the column by the pulpit.

The second rector was the Rev. Gilbert Elliott, D.D., 1846 to 1850, who was very much interested in organising the church schools. He had held various livings before his short period at Holy Trinity, and finally became Dean of Bristol.

He was succeeded by the Rev. Thomas Garnier, D.D., who was the third Rector from 1850 to 1859. He eventually became Dean of Ripon and finally of Lincoln, and for a while was Chaplain to the House of Commons.

The fourth Rector, the Rev. William Cadman, M.A., 1859 to 1891, was gifted with a splendid voice, and was a great preacher. During his incumbency the church was filled to capacity, stools being brought into the crowded aisles to accommodate the enormous congregations that came to hear him preach. Six curates at that time were needed to help in the administration of the six district chapels attached to Holy Trinity, one in Hallam Street, now rebuilt as a dwelling house, being known as St. Mark's Hall. There being a great surplus of money derived from pew rents, No. 6 Albany Terrace was purchased, as a rectory.

William Cadman has been described as "never young." Intending the enter Holy Orders he learned Greek as a youth while tending sheep in his native village of Billenge, Yorkshire. During his incumbency he used to make an annual visit to his old home, where he was known with pride as "oor Willum." Before coming to Holy Trinity, he had been Rector of St. George the Martyr, Southwark. While at Holy Trinity he was made a Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral and Canon of Canterbury. A further memorial, given by "his parishioners and friends" is the Bapistry.

A window in the chancel apse bears the following inscription: "This window is erected to the Glory of God and in affectionate memory of Laetitia Ann Rose Cadman, wife of the Rector of this Parish who died 12th January 1889." It is believed that this refers to the third window in the chancel apse, but it may belong to the window in the Baptistry which has not been identified.

Canon Cadman was succeeded by the Rev. Arthur James Robinson, M.A., 1892 to 1897, during whose incumbency books were provided in the pews, and the building of the Church House was commenced with a donation of £3,000 from Lady de Walden. He had previously been Rector of Whitechapel. From Holy Trinity he went to Birmingham as Rector, and became a Canon of Worcester. The centre window in the chancel apse is erected to his memory.

The sixth Rector was the Rev. Edward Grose Hodge, M.A., 1897 to 1911. During this period the Church House was completed, antiphonal singing of the psalter was introduced, and a "Dedication Day" instituted. Mr. Grose Hodge had been Vicar of Holy Trinity, Leicester, and St. James', Holloway, before becoming Rector of Holy Trinity. Later he became a Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral, Vicar of Paddington, and finally Rector of Birmingham.

He was followed by the Rev. Ernest Newton Sharpe, M.A., 1912 to 1918, covering the period of the First World War, when the crypt of the church was open during air-raids. His previous parishes had been in West Hampstead and Manchester. After leaving Holy Trinity he became a Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral, Vicar of St. James', Paddington, and finally Archdeacon of London.

The next and eighth Rector was the Rev. Charles Leonard Thornton-Duesbery, M.A., 1919 to 1925, who had been Vicar of Leyton, during whose incumbency there was much friendly intercourse with the Free Churches of Marylebone. In 1925 he was consecrated Bishop of Sodor and Man.

The ninth Rector was the Rev. George Frederick Saywell, M.A., 1925 to 1944. He had had experience of parochial work in Toronto, and during the first World War went to France with the Y.M.C.A. After this he was one of the Foreign Secretaries of the Church Missionary Society, and on taking this post visited various Missions in the Far East. While at Holy Trinity he was examining chaplain to the Bishops of Leicester and London, and in 1942 was appointed a Prebendary of St. Paul's. The second World War broke out during his period of office, and there was extensive bombing in the parish, the Clergy House being virtually destroyed. The school buildings and the rectory also suffered considerable damage. He left Holy Trinity to become Rector of St. Michael's, Cornhill. During his incumbency the vestibule at the end of the church was erected as a memorial to Mr. Robert Ferdinand Hunger, parish clerk for 45 years and churchwarden for four years. It was from a notebook, kept by Mr. Hunger and recently brought to light, that much of the material for these notes was obtained.

The Rev. Harold George Michael Clarke, M.A., was the tenth and, at the time of writing, the last Rector. During his incumbency from 1945 to 1951 the rebuilding of some of the war-damaged properties of the Church was completed, and the rebuilding of the Clergy House as a block of flats commenced. He had been Headmaster of Repton School (in which position one of his predecessors was the present Archbishop of Canterbury) and was chaplain to the Bishop of Derby. In September, 1951 he resigned the living of Holy Trinity to become Provost of Birmingham Cathedral.

Parishioners

A number of celebrated people have lived in the parish of Holy Trinity. Two sculptors, John Flaxman and Thomas Denman, occupied premises on the site of the present Club House, and W. Turner and

Allan Ramsey, both painters, lived nearby in Harley Street, as did also W. E. Gladstone, Viscountess Nelson (widow of Lord Nelson), the Duke of Wellington, Barry Cornwall, and Florence Nightingale who, accompanied by her nephew, attended Holy Trinity. Devonshire Street was the home of Sir John Herschel, the astronomer, and of Sir Arthur Pearson, the publisher. The ex-king of Spain, Joseph Buonaparte, and Lord Lister lived in Park Crescent. Lord Roberts ("Bobs" of the Boer War) lived in Portland Place and was a member of the congregation of Holy Trinity.

Among others who attended the church may be noted Thomson Hankey, a Governor of the Bank of England; Sir Stafford Northcote, at one time private secretary to Gladstone and later Chancellor of the Exchequer and Foreign Secretary; and Charlotte Maria Tucker, who wrote many novels under the pen-name of "A.L.O.E" (A Lady of England), and went to India as a missionary.

This brings the Historical Notes to a close. In January, 1952, the Bishop of London proposed that in view of the marked decline in the residential population the time had come when Holy Trinity parish should again be united with that of the Parish Church of St. Marylebone. Subsequently it was arranged that this well-loved church would become the headquarters of the S.P.C.K., part of it being adapted for business purposes while the chancel and part of the nave would continue to be available for Sunday and week-day services.

In many respects this arrangement seemed appropriate for keen missionary interests had long been a marked characteristic of Holy Trinity. Financial contributions, chiefly to the C.M.S., have been steadily maintained, and the records give the names of no fewer than thirteen missionaries associated with the church.

This personal link became closer when R. A. Wright and Guy Bullen who had served together as curates at Holy Trinity both went to West Africa. The latter left in 1926 for Northern Nigeria where he, with his wife who was a doctor, did fine work. In 1935 he was appointed Assistant Bishop in Egypt and the Sudan; there was a great sense of loss in that diocese and in Holy Trinity when he was killed in an aeroplane accident after little more than two years. The Rev. R. A. (later Canon) Wright completed 25 years as Colonial Chaplain at Lagos Cathedral.

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