



St Paul's Church Grove Park Chiswick 1872-2022 OUR HISTORY



The Beginnings of Grove Park



Grove House, 1792

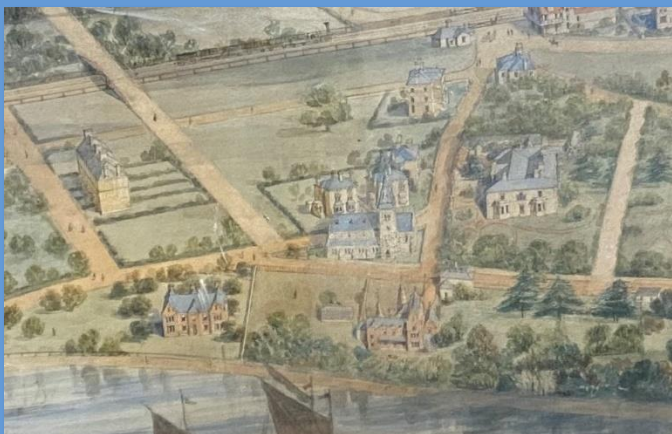
A large residence with extensive grounds called Grove House, standing at what is now the west end of Kinnaird Avenue, is first mentioned in 1412, in a record of its sale to Mr Thomas Holgill. Its gardens were described as “the finest in England” and covered most of what we know today as Grove Park. In 1540 the Barker family moved into Grove House staying there for 200 years. Coincidentally, the Barker family, (Derek, Cassandra and their four girls) who are longstanding members of St Paul’s live in almost exactly the same spot today, although they are probably not related! Grove House is now no longer standing, it was demolished in 1928 and it is rumoured that it was taken down brick by brick, and shipped to the US, to be rebuilt!

By the middle of the 19th century William Cavendish the 7th Duke of Devonshire, owned more than half the land in Chiswick, having steadily acquired the main estates over the previous 100 years. His land centred around Chiswick House, (which the family had inherited from the Earl of Burlington, by virtue of the 4th Duke’s marriage to Burlington’s daughter). Grove House and its land was acquired by the 7th Duke in about 1840. By then, the estate covered about 84 acres of land of which 67 were in an enclosed park bordered by the Thames where Hartington Road runs today.

In 1849 the railway came to Chiswick (Chiswick Station) giving easy access to Waterloo. The area was attracting nobility, prominent artists, poets, horticulturalists, and becoming highly sought after. In 1867, the Grove Park Hotel (now The Old Station House pub) was completed, to cater for visitors to the area, for river sports and other leisure activities. Meanwhile, the 7th Duke was beginning to plan a new residential estate on his grounds between the new railway line and the Thames, to be called the Grove Park Estate. He intended it as a high-class residential area for wealthy merchants. The first houses were on the river side of Grove Park Road, where large Victorian villas were built, and development soon extended to Hartington Road.

Many of the street names in Grove Park are related to the duke’s patronage, such as **Burlington**, **Cavendish**, and **Devonshire**. The Duke of Devonshire’s heir is the Marquis of **Hartington** and the family held a good deal of property in Yorkshire and Derbyshire, giving us **Chatsworth** and **Bolton** Abbey (near Harrogate), **Chesterfield**, **Staveley** (a town near Chesterfield) and **Edensor** (a village near Chatsworth).

The new Grove Park estate needed a church in order to become its own parish, and so the duke provided the land on which St Paul’s is built, and contributed largely to the cost of building the new church. It was also funded by the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII), Baroness Rothschild and various affluent members of the neighbourhood. The *West London Observer* reported in 1872 that: *“The new parish of St Paul’s which includes the whole of Strand on the Green, will be bounded on the North by the London and South Western Railway, extending from Kew Bridge to Barnes Railway southwards, and on the South by the line of the river Thames and as it has now in or near its centre an effective church and an able and earnest Pastor, we trust much good will result to the inhabitants of what we may now call the new Parish of St Paul’s.”*



This picture (which hangs in Chiswick library) was apparently commissioned by the railway company before much of Grove Park was built,

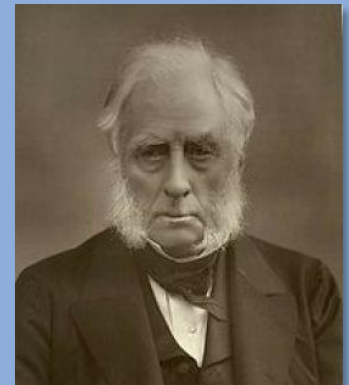
as a visualisation of how attractive the new suburb would be. You will notice from the close-up view on the left, that the illustration of St Paul’s church bears very little resemblance to how the finished church actually looked!

The 7th Duke of Devonshire



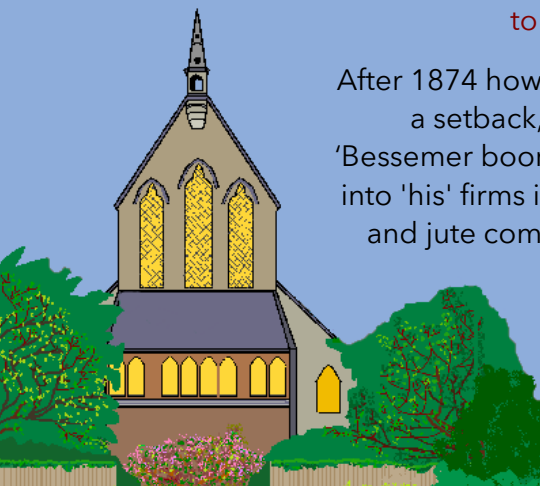
William Cavendish, 7th Duke of Devonshire (1808-1891) was seen as a prime example of the industrious, abstemious, virtuous, public-spirited, Victorian aristocrat. He married his cousin, Lady Blanche Georgiana, who (almost a child bride) was as serious, earnest, and devout as her husband. A well-matched pair, they were happiest when reading Wesley's sermons together. Unfortunately, she died in 1840, probably of tuberculosis, and following the death of his beloved wife, Cavendish initially became something of a recluse, spending his time looking after his famous herd of shorthorns. However, very soon he threw himself into the serious and useful work of the personal management of his estates which was to occupy the rest of his life.

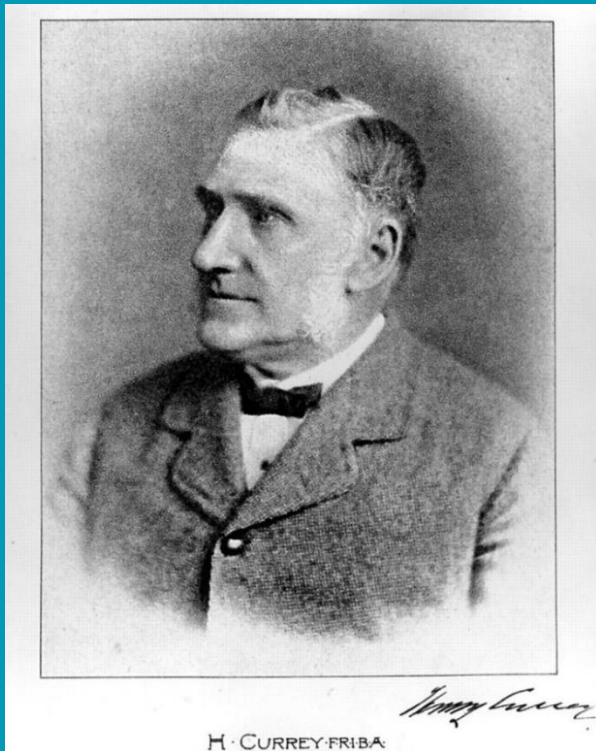
He never had a rentier attitude towards his possessions, instead of simply pocketing his mineral royalties and railway dividends he regarded it as a matter of moral duty to use them to finance the further development of the region. This, coupled with his close attention to all the businesses with which he became involved, made him into a regional entrepreneur of the first rank. He also invested in the development of Barrow, and this increased steadily so that by 1874 the duke, with a gross income of more than £300,000, was probably the richest individual in the land.



Besides the foundation of St Paul's church, and Grove Park, the duke had an impact on the sporting and gardening life of Chiswick! In 1883 he leased a piece of land to Chiswick residents who wished to form a sports club. Cricket, football, lawn tennis and bowls were played at the new club, by women as well as men and the Chiswick Park Lawn Tennis Club was for many years the scene of the annual Middlesex Open Tennis Championships, making the venue second only to Wimbledon in importance. Furthermore, the Turnham Green Cricket Club was formed in 1853 as the Turnham Green Devonshire cricket club, so called because the Duke of Devonshire was its patron. The Horticultural Society had its experimental gardens in Chiswick (from 1822 to 1904) and the Society leased the 33 acres from the duke. They adjoined the grounds of Chiswick House and a private gate was inserted between the two properties to enable the duke to enter the gardens whenever he chose!

After 1874 however, misfortune struck. Firstly, the whole British economy suffered a setback, and secondly, Barrow was hit especially hard by the ending of the 'Bessemer boom' in the steel industry. During this period the duke poured money into 'his' firms in a frantic effort to prop up the ailing steel, shipbuilding, shipping, and jute companies. The result of this was that at his death in 1891 he left debts of some £2 million, all sunk in what had turned into unproductive investments.





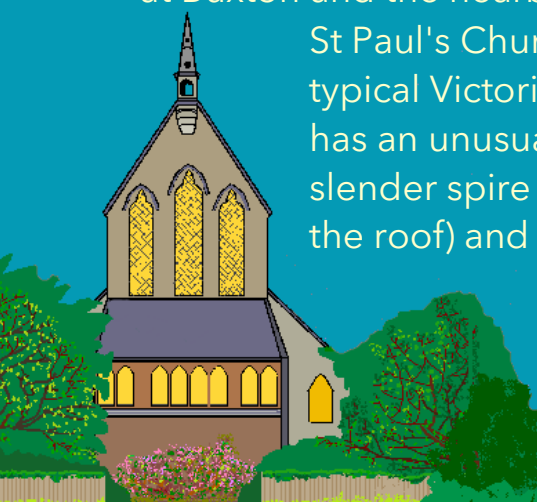
Henry Currey

architect of St Paul's Church

St Paul's Church was designed by the English architect Henry Currey (1820-1900) and built by Mr J Lye of Ealing. It is built from Kentish Ragstone with Bath stone quoins and dressings both to the buttresses and the window and door surrounds.

Henry Currey was educated at Eton, and then articulated to an architect's firm in Gray's Inn, London. In 1859, he was appointed by the 7th Duke of Devonshire who owned many buildings and much land in Eastbourne, and he designed the original College House for Eastbourne College and the school's Cavendish Library. Between 1874 and 1875, he designed the Winter Garden, Pavilion and Devonshire Park Theatre in Eastbourne; buildings which were influenced by his travels to Italy in the early 1860s. He designed St Thomas's Hospital in London built in the 'pavilion style', which opened on the Albert Embankment in 1871, including a teaching hospital and a nursing school to a design approved by Florence Nightingale. He was also the architect and surveyor to Coram's Foundling Hospital and the Magdalene Hospital in London. Other notable works include the hotel at London Bridge Station and the Pump Room at Buxton and the nearby Baths.

St Paul's Church is in many ways a typical Victorian church; however, it has an unusual fleche (the small slender spire placed on the ridge of the roof) and a mock belfry.



The Consecration of St Paul's Church in 1872

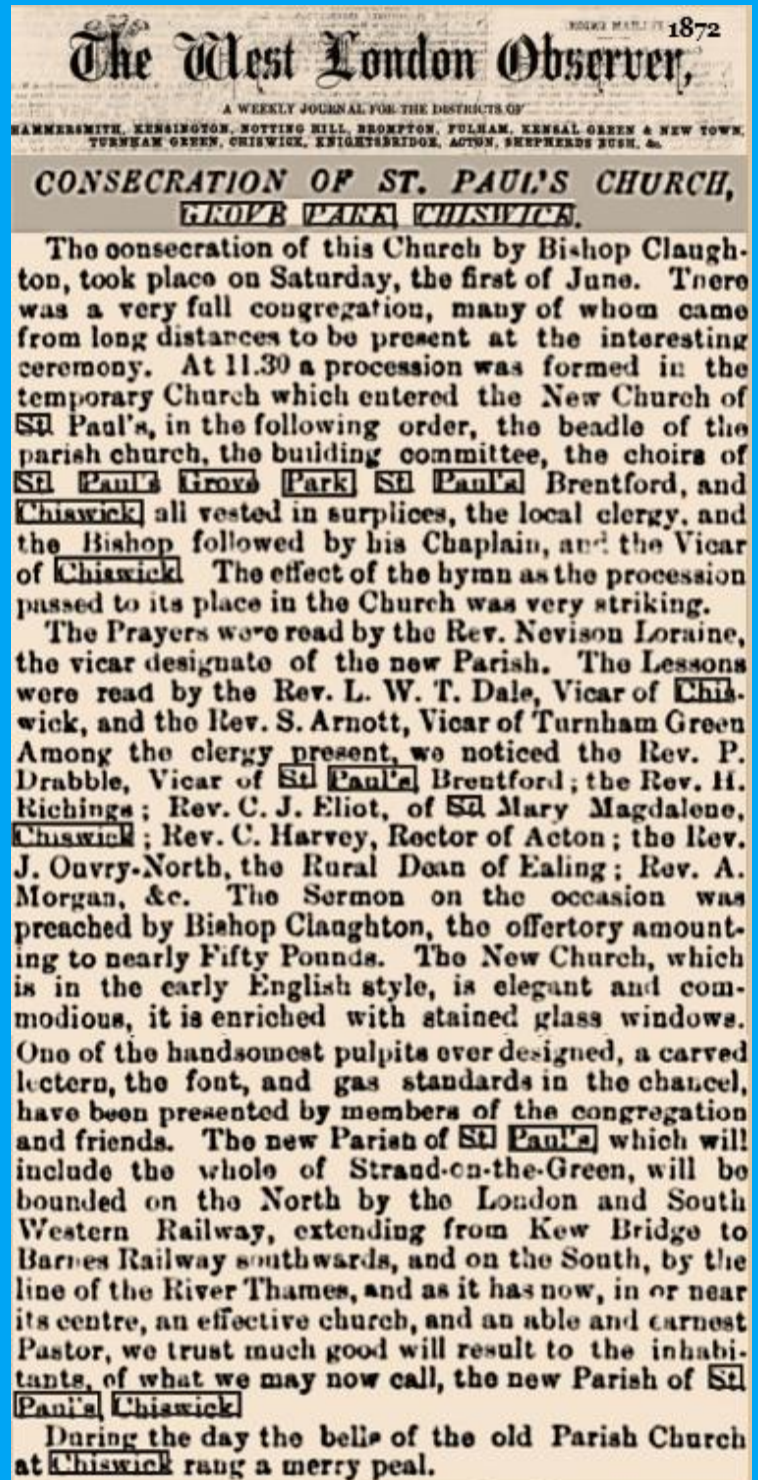
This report from the *West London Observer* tells us that the Consecration by Bishop Claughton of the new church took place on Saturday 1 June, 1872.

"There was a very full congregation, many of came from long distances to be present at the interesting ceremony.

At 11.30 a procession was formed in the temporary Church which entered the New Church of St. Paul's, in the following order, the Beadle of the Parish Church, the building committee, the choirs of St. Paul's Grove Park, St. Paul's Brentford, and Chiswick, all vested in surplices, the local clergy and the Bishop followed by his Chaplain, and the Vicar of Chiswick. The effect of the hymn as the procession passed to its place in the Church was very striking.

The New Church, which is in the early English style, is elegant and commodious, it is enriched with stained glass windows. One of the handsomest pulpits ever designed, carved lectern, the font, and gas standards in the chancel, have been presented members of the congregation and friends.

During the day the bells of the old Parish Church at Chiswick rang a merry peal."

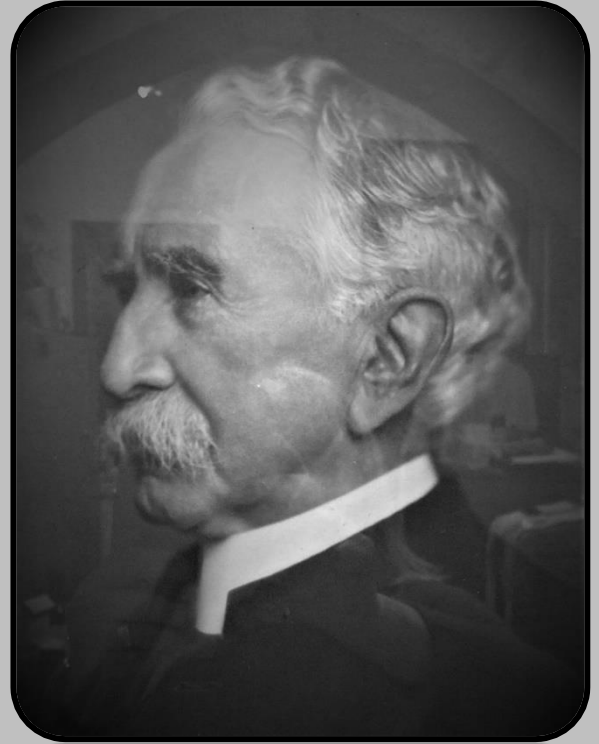


Rev Nevison Loraine

The first vicar of St Paul's

Rev Loraine arrived in Grove Park in 1870, and was vicar at a temporary 'iron church' while St Paul's was being built. He stayed at St Paul's for a remarkably long time - 47 years until 1917. He is reputed to have been a notable preacher, and made a great impression on local life. He had three children: Geraldine, Ernest and Herbert.

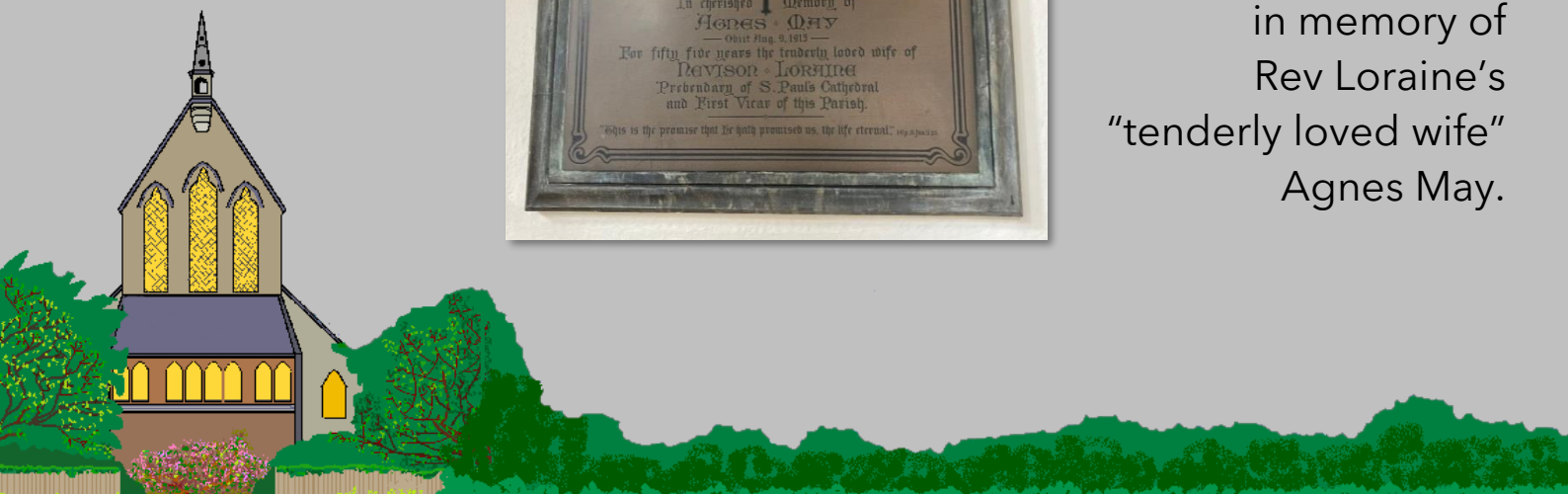
Grove Park residents will spot that they all had nearby streets named after them with Loraine Road of course named after the Reverend himself!



The early records of the church list some of the trades and professions of its parishioners. There were five fishermen, thirty-eight watermen and barge builders, eight stockbrokers and twenty-five gentlemen! Also listed were a maltster, tutor, horticulturist, publisher, coachman, stone mason, consul, seed-crusher, keeper of the herbarium, sailmaker, artist, lamplighter, captain of a steam tug and a billiard maker.



This panel above the door to the vestry is in memory of Rev Loraine's "tenderly loved wife" Agnes May.



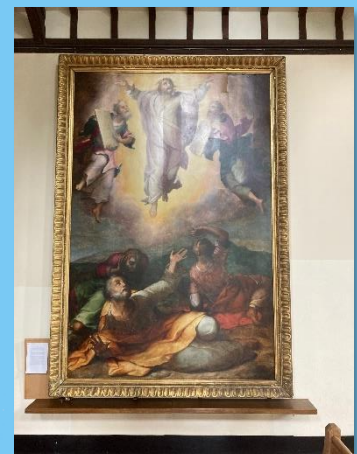
The Painting of the Transfiguration

In 1903 Bishop Montgomery baptised his son Brian Frederick (brother to Field Marshall Montgomery) at the church and bequeathed St Paul's a large painting from his house. The painting of the Transfiguration is thought to have been painted in the late 16th century and come from Florence. It owes something to the style of Raphael and is unusual as it is painted on wood panels rather than canvas. The outer frame is judged to be of the same period, though was not made for the painting and the inner frame is late 19th century. The painting probably began its life in an architectural setting within a stone structure above an altar at the east end of a church or monastery. The position and size of the figures suggest they were meant to be viewed from some distance. It is believed that the picture was originally taller, with more space above the figure of Jesus. It may have been cut down for ease of transport or to fit the frame.

The transfiguration was a visionary experience for Jesus and his closest disciples Peter, James and John. Jesus is so close to God in prayer that his clothes are bathed in light, and two great figures from the past, Moses and Elijah appear on either side of him.



It was moved to its present position in the church in 1949 when the wall across the transept was built, repairing damage from bombing in WWII. It was cleaned and restored in 2006.



The Great War

When war was declared, there was panic in Chiswick. There was a rush on the shops of Chiswick High Road and several ran out of supplies. One problem was that the wholesalers' horses had been requisitioned by the government. In Brentford alone, 150 horses were commandeered for the army from the council, breweries and laundries. Excited crowds gathered at level crossings and bridges to cheer the troops as they passed by and normal timetables were suspended to allow trains carrying troops, horses and guns to get through to Southampton. German goods were boycotted and J Bosence, Jeweller of Chiswick High Road, was wrongly reported to the police as a German. (Luckily, he claimed he could trace his family back to 1066 in Cornwall!)



At first there was no great rush to join the army and a local vicar wrote to the *Chiswick Times* to say he was nauseated by the spectacle of be-flannelled young men enjoying cricket, tennis and river punting while others gave their lives in Belgium and France. But by the end of November the newspaper printed the names of nearly 1,500 Chiswick men who had 'responded to the call' with most local men joining either the volunteers (Kitchener's Army) or the Middlesex Regiment, known as the 'Die Hards'. In total, it is estimated that 15 to 22 million lives were lost to WWI around the globe.

After the war there was a great deal of building work in Grove Park with many new houses being built in Park Road, Chatsworth Road, Staveley Road, Spencer Road and Sutton Court Road among others. At St Paul's, in 1920 the South Transept was converted into a Memorial Chapel and gas radiators were installed.

The next vicar of St Paul's was **Rev A.G.C. Stamp** who took up his position in 1918 and remained at St Paul's until 1927.



Rev Wilfred Simmons

Vicar at St Paul's 1927-1940

Rev Simmons arrived at St Paul's in 1927. He had previously been a missionary in Africa where he learnt Swahili. He had a wife, Hester and two daughters, one of whom very sadly died of diabetes aged 17. He was also very keen on the theatre and had been chaplain at the Questors Theatre in Ealing where he was great friends with all the actors. By all accounts, he was a rather good actor himself! He formed the Grove Park Players, a group of young parishioners who performed plays - usually Shakespeare - at the Church Institute at the bottom of Pymont Road (The Institute was later destroyed during WWII, then rebuilt as a church hall for St Paul's and is now rented to Toddlers World.)

In 1929, the dilapidated clergy and choir stalls were replaced with oak stalls, the steps to chancel were rearranged and the pulpit was moved from the south side of the chancel arch to its present position. A lectern of granite and Bath stone was replaced with one made of carved oak and a doorway was constructed in the fourth wall of the chancel giving access to the vestry.

The family lived in Ripley near Woking during the week, coming up to St Paul's at the weekends for services.

Rev Simmons left St Paul's in 1940 and died of a stroke on 24 May 1944.



Fauconberg Road
in the 1920s



Chiswick High Road
in the 1930s



WWII

The vicar of St Paul's between 1940 and 1946 was Rev J E Scarlett.

Like much of London, Chiswick suffered from heavy bomb damage during WWII. Grove Park has its own place in the history books, as the first V2 to land on Britain fell in the centre of Staveley Road at 6.44pm on 8 September 1944. The German rocket left a huge crater, 30ft deep. Three people died and 22 were injured, 11 houses were demolished and 27 more nearby were seriously damaged. The story quickly spread that the blast was caused by an exploding gas main. However, the arrival of what local residents described as "government bigwigs" including Home Secretary Herbert Morrison, (who two days before the V2 dropped on Chiswick had declared "The battle of London is won") in Staveley Road, within hours of the blast, aroused suspicions that this was not the case. A second V2 had come down in Epping, moments after the one in Chiswick. The British Government tried to keep secret the nature of the explosions, both to deprive the Germans of military information and manage the effect upon Londoners' morale; and it was not until early November, after Hitler had announced that his new weapon had been used, that Churchill spoke about the V2s in Parliament.



During the war the poet and playwright Dylan Thomas lived in the vicarage, with his wife Caitlin Macnamara (whom he had married in 1937). The ground floor of the vicarage was converted into a bed-sit at that time. A letter from Dylan Thomas to the poet and literary editor John Bayliss, confirms that he was living there; it is published in *Dylan Thomas: Collected Letters*. The Brentford & Chiswick Local History Society think that the suggested date of 1944 is probably wrong, and it was more likely to have been written sometime between 1938 and 1941.



JOHN BAYLISS¹
[?1944]

64 Grove Park Road Chiswick W4

Dear Mr. Bayliss:

Have I written to you? I know I did write, but have I posted it? If not, do please accept my apologies. Everything's in such a muddle here, as you probably saw even from the outside of the vicarage. Do use those two poems of mine that you want. On the same understanding as the other contributors of course: drop of royalties, if any.

Sorry I was away when you called. Call in if you're round here again, won't you?

Yours sincerely,
Dylan Thomas

MS: Texas

Rev John Herbert Edwin Warren

Vicar of St Paul's 1947-1966

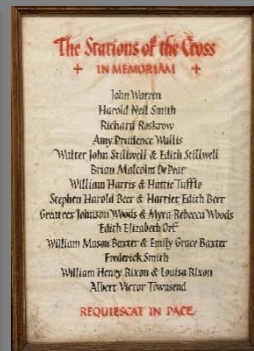


Rev Warren was inducted to St Pauls on 27 January 1947, which is the date of the Conversion of St Paul in the C of E calendar, and with him, as Frances Eldridge (1910-2003) a member of the congregation at that time, put it: "The life of the Parish revived". Rev Warren was apparently not a great preacher, but "a man of prayer" and certainly seems to have had the support of his flock. Congregation sizes increased rapidly and Rev Warren was very keen on ceremonies and processions, with Feast Day services being very well attended and remembered as "a real treat". The *Brentford and Chiswick Times* (Dec 1965) commented on the "high church Anglican atmosphere that is part of the tradition at St Paul's" and noted that the assistant vicar Rev Seely had recently made a visit to Rome for an audience with Pope Paul. Those who remember that time recall it as a church where everyone was included and made to feel welcome. Most services had a sung liturgy, and large choir was directed by the organist and composer Conrad Lewis.

In these prosperous times, Rev Warren was not without help in the parish, and had a series of curates, namely Fr Harbottle, Fr Burger, Fr Miller and Fr Seely. There was also a housekeeper, Mrs Smith, who ran the vicarage, with a neighbour living at 64A acting as chauffeur and Mr Bill Morley attending to the garden.

A new red and gold High Altar, originally designed in Ninian Comper's workshop was brought into the church from St Margaret's church in Birmingham (which had been bombed out in the war). Sir John Ninian Comper (1864 - 1960) was one of the last Gothic Revival architects and his work is celebrated for his use of colour, iconography and emphasis on churches as a setting for liturgy. Frances Eldridge recalled "when our new Altar was installed, a rose-pink curtain and a rose wall formed the background and this connected with the Testa (a sounding board) above. The whole Altar glowed in the light, especially when the evening sun shone from the west window."

Money was raised by members of the congregation to purchase the Stations of the Cross which still adorn the walls of the church today. They were painted by Enid Chadwick, an artist working in the Anglican shrine at Walsingham, Norfolk. The picture shown below records the parishioners in whose memory the paintings were purchased.

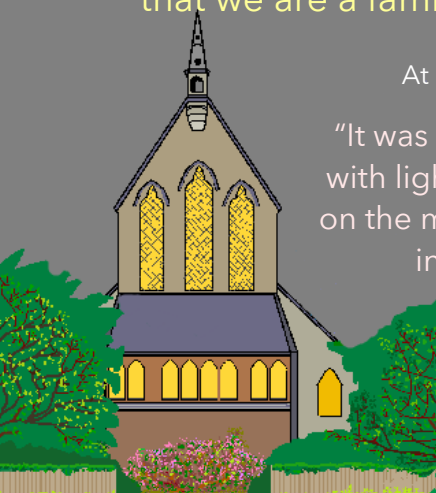


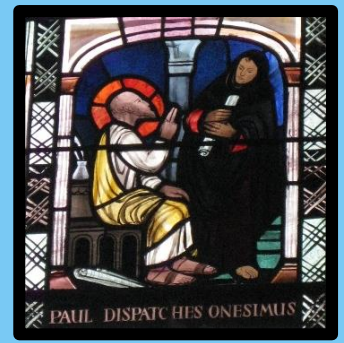
In 1961 a Christian Stewardship scheme was launched at a dinner in Chiswick Town Hall, and a covenanting scheme explained. This was very successful, with Father Warren saying a year later:

"We are all now shareholders in the church. Our main job is not business, it is spreading the Gospel in this Parish and any success we have is due to the fact that we are a family, and as such, work together without any divisions."

At Father Warren's memorial service, parishioner Roger Bloomfield spoke of him thus:

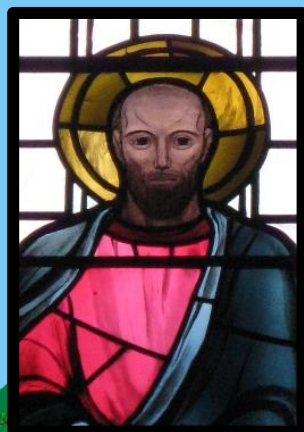
"It was as though he had created a rich and varied house for us, with many rooms with lights in the window, and a front door with not too many steps and 'Welcome' on the mat. He ruled it firmly, uncompromising in his insistence that in our lives and in this house, we were to celebrate and praise God, and that in all that entailed, we were to be valued for ourselves and we were to have fun."





Post-war renovations in the church

St Paul's was the only church in Chiswick to suffer from damage during the war. An oil bomb destroyed the original Lady Chapel (next to the Vestry) and all the windows were blown out. During Father Warren's time at St Paul's, the ruined Lady Chapel was converted into a large room, and used for many social events in the parish. The ugly coke stove at the back of the church was replaced with a new boiler and heating system, and a new High Altar was brought into the chancel from a bombed-out church in Birmingham. He also had the windows replaced. Rev Warren made the decision that rather than purchase inferior stained-glass windows for the entire church, he would replace all but those at the altar end of the church with plain glass. With the money saved, he then purchased high quality modern stained-glass windows by Margaret E Aldrich Rope, for the apse above the High Altar, depicting the figures of St Peter and St Paul and scenes from their lives.



Music at St Paul's in the 1950s and 60s under Conrad Lewis

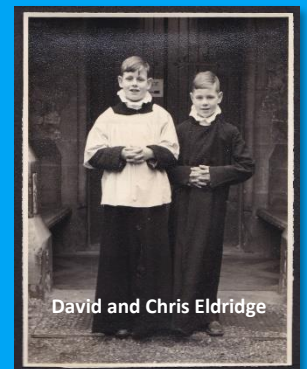


The St Paul's choir was large and impressive and composed entirely of boys and men, which was usual for London churches at this time.

It was directed by the ex-Oxford organ scholar and composer, **Conrad Lewis**. Both the morning Eucharist and Evensong were sung, and the choirboys were extremely well rehearsed, with five choir practices a week, on Monday and Wednesday evenings, Saturday morning and two on Sunday.

David Eldridge who joined the choir aged 7 recalls:

"The choir all wore robes of black cassocks and white cottas. Actually, the boys started out as probationers with cassock, then graduated to 'singing boy' after earning their cotta, and then up to three senior boys could become choristers, who wore Oxford blue coloured beribboned medals engraved with the word 'perseverance'. The church was really what you would call rather 'high' at that time, and both the music and the ceremonies were tremendous!"

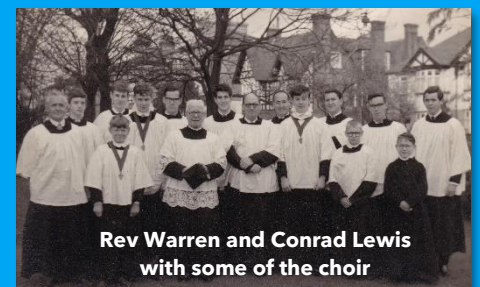


On feast days, both choir and servers would process around the church to the Vaughan Williams setting of the hymn *Hail Thee, Festival Day* – apparently a very splendid sight indeed! According to Chris Eldridge, the St Paul's church choir was considered by other musicians to be "the best choir west of Sloane Square." David remembers:

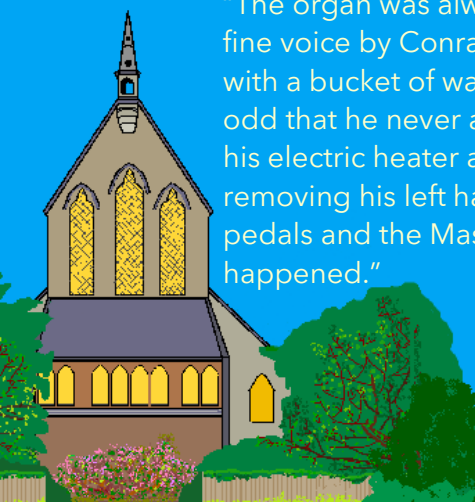
"As I grew older, he taught me how to play the organ, which was a rather mighty beast in those days! I had the nickname 'the Sorcerers Apprentice' which perhaps tells you something both about the energy he brought to the music in church, as well the sort of pupil I was!" The pipe organ was a 3 manual Holdich, the action was getting parlous and eventually, a Dutch firm removed it, and the lovely pipe work went to Norway."

Another parishioner, Roger Bloomfield later recalled:

"The organ was always a bit iffy and had to be coaxed into fine voice by Conrad with Mr Orff said always to be nearby with a bucket of water and a ball of string, just in case. How odd that he never appeared when Conrad caught fire from his electric heater and had to be beaten out without removing his left hand from the console nor his feet from the pedals and the Mass sailed on as though nothing had happened."



Conrad Lewis moved on from St Paul's in 1968 to take up the position of Director of Music at St Mary's, Bourne Street, near Sloane Square.



Memories of St Paul's in the 1950s and 60s from David and Chris Eldridge

John and Frances Eldridge lived with their three children Christopher, David and Mary at 32 Grove Park Road until their deaths in the early 2000s. John and Frances' ashes are interned in the church garden, under a cherry tree. The house was originally bought by Frances's father, Arthur Brown, a schoolmaster, in 1928 for around £600. According to David, he "saw it being built (he was living at the time in Whitehall Gardens), and thought it looked like a jolly good bet for a family home!"

John and Frances were married at St Paul's in August 1940, just before the Battle of Britain, when the congregation were told what to do if the air raid siren sounded during the ceremony - which luckily it didn't!

David's earliest memories of St Paul's are from around 1951, when he was 5. He remembers his parents being very keen that he started learning hymns, in order that he could join the church choir as soon as he was able, which was in 1953, when he was 7.

The music at St Paul's was directed by the ex-Oxford organ scholar, Conrad Lewis. David remembers:

"Conrad Lewis was a real force, a superb musician, who composed many of his own settings for the services at St Paul's. He ran the choir with a very firm hand, but he taught me an enormous amount. I remember on one occasion crying, when a lengthy two-hour choir practice on Saturday morning meant I was missing out on a trip with my father to buy a new part for my model railway! He could be a hard taskmaster, but he gave me a love of music which has sustained me throughout my life."

Chris remembers that the choirboys were required to attend five practises per week:

"Monday and Wednesday evenings, Saturday morning and with full choir on Sundays, one hour before Solemn Mass and one hour in advance of Solemn Evensong and Benediction."

As a result, music and singing became a major part of one's life and perhaps kept us out of mischief (although not entirely)."

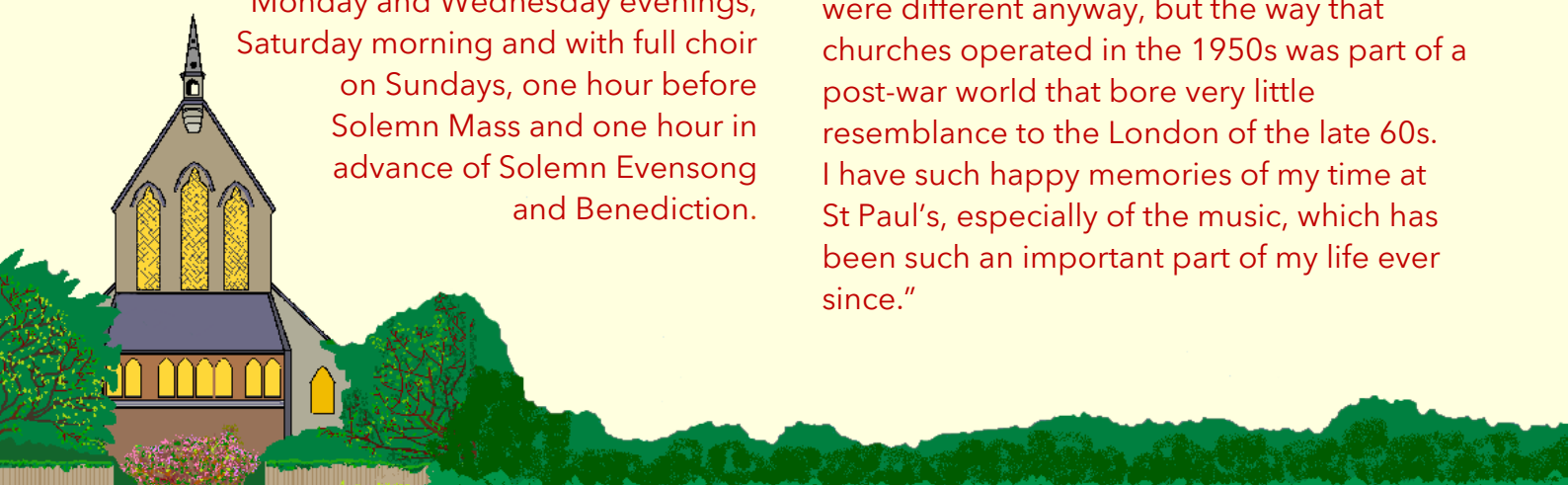
There was also a full team of servers: acolytes, crucifer, theorifer and boat boy, as well as the MC. They had black cassocks to wear, with special red ones for feast days. David recalls:

"My brother and I were also on the weekday servers' rota. On Wednesdays and Fridays each member of the clergy said Mass, one at was 6.45am and the other at 7.30am. Getting up for the early Mass was pretty hard on a cold morning and of course we had to go off to school afterwards!

The very active Sunday school met on Sunday afternoons, boys sitting on one side and girls on the other. It was led by Mr Paul Young and Miss Baxter among others. I used to play the hymns for this on the grand piano at the back of the church. In the 1960s a Youth Club was set up, which operated in the Vestry room after Sunday evensong, with table tennis and billiards. There were also active Brownies, Girl Guides, Cubs, and later Sea Scouts, (which had a base in one of the arches at Kew Bridge) started by Peter Pridham, who had been a wartime commander of a motor torpedo boat."

In 1966 Father Warren left St Paul's and a couple of years later, so did Conrad Lewis. As David describes it:

"Everything changed then really. Of course, I was grown up with a job by then, so things were different anyway, but the way that churches operated in the 1950s was part of a post-war world that bore very little resemblance to the London of the late 60s. I have such happy memories of my time at St Paul's, especially of the music, which has been such an important part of my life ever since."



The social life of St Paul's in the 1950s and 60s

Father Warren's arrival heralded a busy and happy time at St Paul's. There was a Women's Social every Tuesday and a Men's Society, run by Father Warren, which had weekly lectures and annual dinners. For the children there were Brownies, Sunday School, Guides, Cubs, Rangers, Sea Scouts and a Youth Club. Yearly garden fetes were held in the vicarage gardens - a particularly memorable one seems to have been the Edwardian Fete - with some of the clergy and congregation arriving in a vintage car for the occasion! There were whist drives, Punch and Judy shows, games, tea events, cake sales and parties - all valuable fundraisers of course as well as great fun and it is clear the Grove Park and St Paul's community thrived during this era.



BRENTFORD AND CHISWICK TIMES

23 December 1965

After Father Warren left St Paul's and before a new vicar was appointed, St Paul's was left in the "young but capable" hands of Father John Seely, who had been the assistant priest since 1964. An article in the *Brentford and Chiswick Times* quoted Rev Seeley extensively, and his words give a good indication of how St Paul's was faring at this time.

"Owing to the fact that geographically the parish is too long and narrow, it is very difficult to minister to those at the Kew Bridge end. They tend to come for baptisms and weddings only. The 'church end' of the parish is far more affluent. Here, **there is not so much**

antagonism towards the church as apathy.

People just do not want to become involved, and are not willing to undertake the demands which religion makes. On the other hand,

those who do attend St Paul's are the most loyal and hard-working band of Christians I

have ever met. To see 56 people cleaning the church last

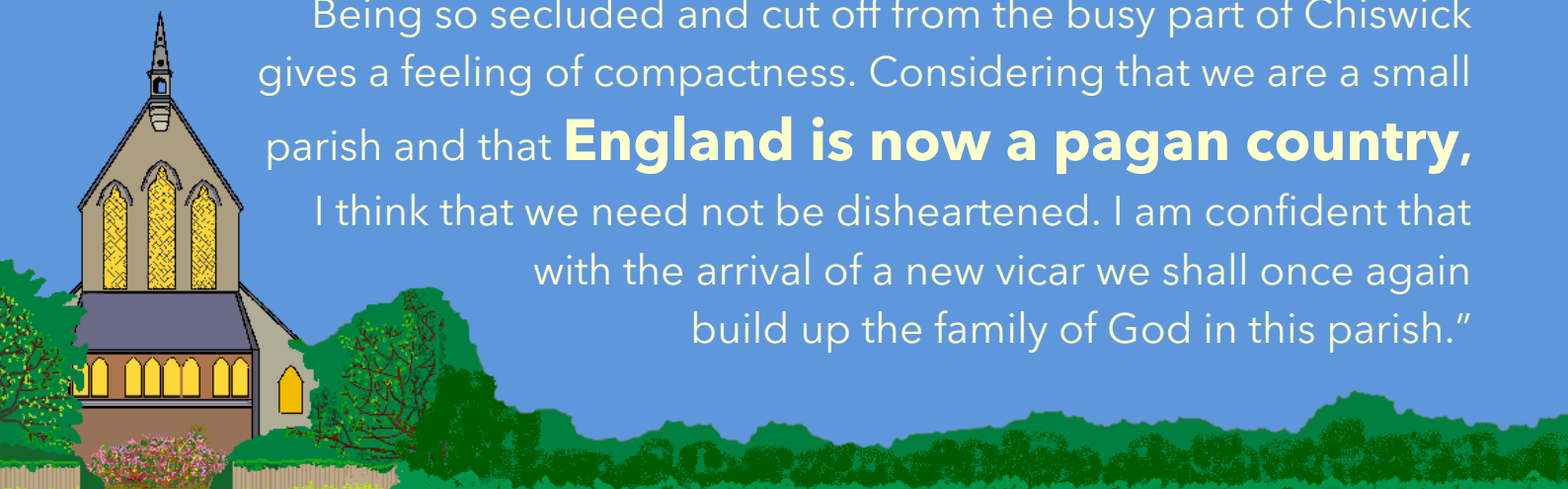
Christmas or to see a great crowd painting the floor of the church last Easter made me realise that their time and talents really were being

used to the glory of God. **There is in Grove Park a real**

community feeling, almost like that of a village.

Being so secluded and cut off from the busy part of Chiswick gives a feeling of compactness. Considering that we are a small parish and that **England is now a pagan country,**

I think that we need not be disheartened. I am confident that with the arrival of a new vicar we shall once again build up the family of God in this parish."



Rev Grime 1966-1988

Rev Grime, a married man with four children, arrived at a difficult time for the church. The congregation had dwindled, with one parishioner recalling that on many occasions the morning service only had a congregation of six. In 1968 a blind organist, Keith Burrows was appointed, and played in church (as well as teaching locally) until 1990, but choir attendance fell away. Church finances had become a thorny issue, and the parish hall at the bottom of Pyrmont Road (which had been rebuilt after the war, and was used for youth parties and groups in the 1950s and 1960s) was rented out to Hounslow Borough Council, in order to help the Parish pay the Diocese its quota. (In 2022, this still belongs to St Paul's and is currently rented privately to a children's daycare nursery.) Rev Grime was perhaps fortunate that his wife was a nurse and could supplement what was then regarded as not a very large income on which to sustain a family of six.

As one parishioner Frances Eldridge, observed: "During this time many changes were taking place in the Church of England and discussions were taking place about 'the reshaping of the liturgy' and 'alternative services.' As in many other churches, it was considered that a nave altar, with the priest facing the people during the Communion service would give the congregation a greater sense of personal involvement. And so, in April 1966 at St Paul's a new free-standing altar with altar rails and a carpeted platform was installed."

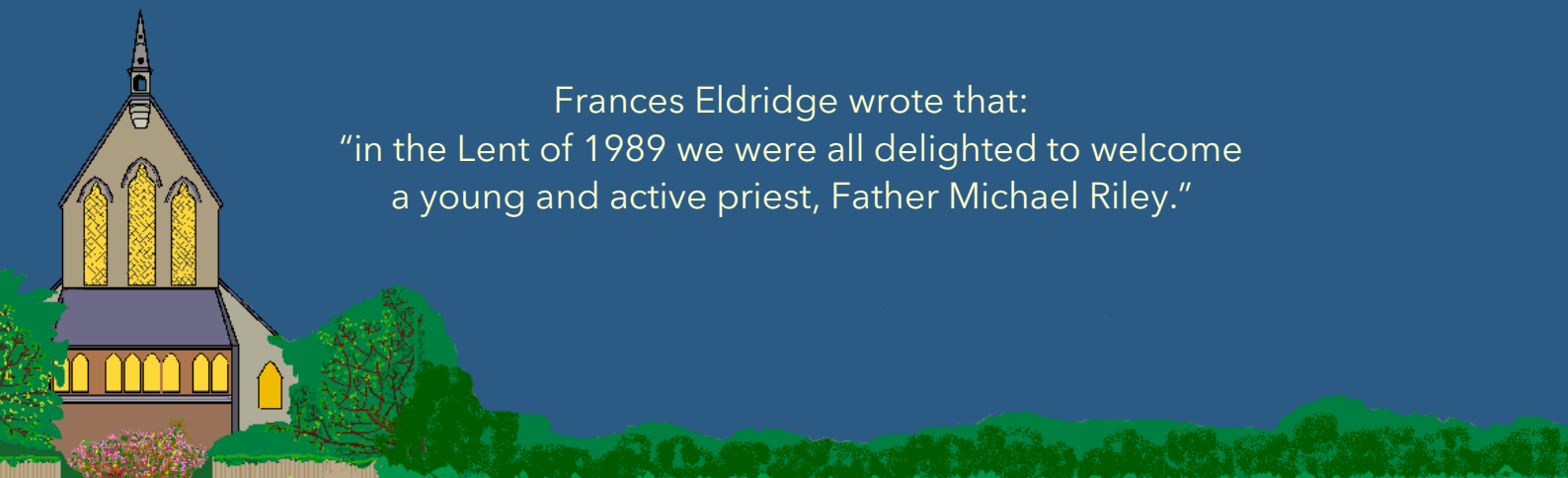


It might be fair to say that Father Grime's era does not seem to have been one of St Paul's most buoyant times. However, Frances Eldridge, recorded that he "conducted services well, and many commented on his kindness and consideration to those who were bereaved, or whom he visited in hospital."

Rev Grime retired in June 1988 and moved to a retirement home in Brighton. During the interregnum, Rev Tuft from St Nicholas's church on Chiswick Mall or sometimes one of his curates took the services, and the Rev David Randall, who lived in 64A next to the Vicarage also assisted.

Frances Eldridge wrote that:

"in the Lent of 1989 we were all delighted to welcome a young and active priest, Father Michael Riley."



Rev Michael Riley

Vicar of St Paul's 1989-2022



With Father Michael's arrival, services, music and other social activities thrived again at St Paul's, with a succession of excellent organists, a rejuvenated choir and performances of musical shows for both adults and children. Jolly evenings in the vicarage in his early years included singing Flanders and Swann round the piano and listening to readings of the Harry Potter books! A very energetic Youth Group in the 1990s took teenagers from the church on camping and walking trips to Snowdonia and Dartmoor. More recently, walking groups have enjoyed St Paul's to St Paul's sponsored walks - from the church to the cathedral! The Youth Group is still a lively force in 2022 and comprises a mixture of activities such as baking, table tennis and snooker as well as discussion of philosophical or religious ideas where doubts are welcomed and questions encouraged! Grovestock, a music festival in the vicarage gardens was hugely popular with the local community, as was the annual fireworks party. A church book club ran for many years, and in 2020 during the Covid pandemic a weekly poetry group started up on Zoom, which is still very active.

In 2019 to mark the connection between our church and its founder, the 7th Duke of Devonshire; a group of walkers from St Paul's visited the home of the current (12th) Duke of Devonshire, Chatsworth House in the Peak District. They presented a picture of our church as it looks today.



A church all ready for the next 150 years!

In 1990, the chancel which had been red, was whitewashed, and the pink curtain removed. A few years later, the pews of the church were stripped back to their original pine, making the whole body of the church seem lighter and more welcoming and the floor tiles were painted and restored. In 1994 the heating was updated and the old decorative organ pipes repositioned and refurbished. In 1996 a new nave platform was built with removable altar rails to give more space for the front pews and to make wider the steps to the chancel. Funds were raised by the community for a new state of the art lighting and sound system making both services and church events a real pleasure to attend! The old organ was replaced with an electric one.

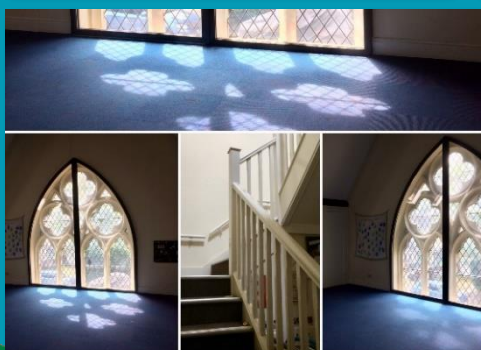
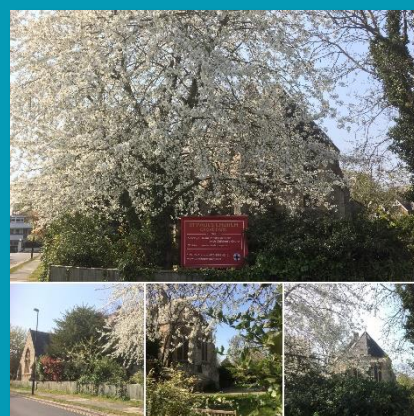
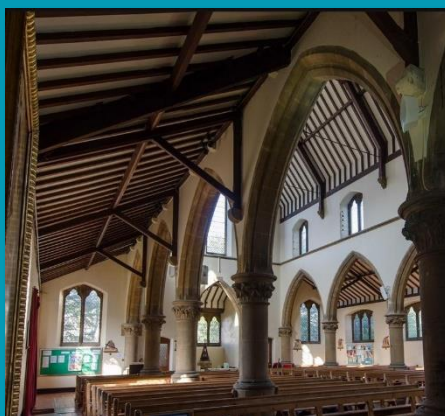
A Petrov grand piano was very kindly donated by the Tanner family, giving the option of piano or organ for services and this has also been much used for recitals and concerts. The fixed wooden choir stalls in the chancel were removed, making a larger more flexible space for singers to use.



In winter 2021, building work began to repair the roof and walls of the North Aisle. The blown plaster on the internal walls was replaced with new lime plaster and the redecoration following this ensured that by spring 2022 the church was safe, clean, dry and warm!

The large church room next to the vestry is now a light, bright and modern two-storey space. The addition of a second floor made the space more useable by different community groups, and a fully equipped kitchen and toilets, including disabled facilities, were also added.

Plans for the future include developing the church garden so that it can be more easily enjoyed by everyone.





Microloan Foundation

The Microloan Foundation was started by Peter Ryan at St Paul's in 2002. This charity helps some of the poorest women in the world feed their families, send their children to school, and pay for life saving medicines. By providing small loans and ongoing business training and support, they help women in rural Malawi and Zambia to set up their own self-sustainable businesses; enabling them to work themselves and their families out of poverty.

The picture here was painted by Marion Armitage to celebrate the launch of the charity.

Refuges Welcome



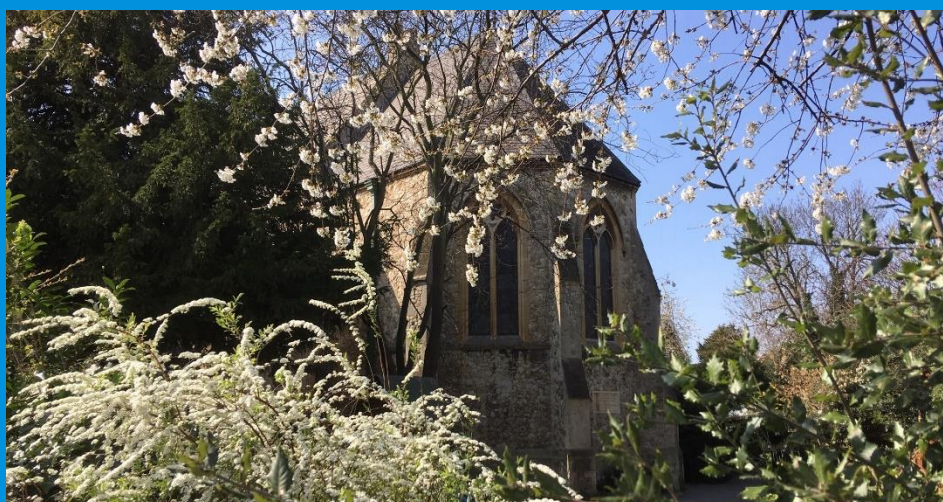
Refugees Welcome Hounslow was set up by Rachel Tanner, Shelagh Allsop and other volunteers in 2017 to welcome Syrian families fleeing their homes as refugees into our community. Since then, they have helped settle many households into our borough, who have enriched our communities. One said: "I can't describe the support they gave us since we got to Britain. They were our brothers, our friends and family in our new country. They stood with us in all the hard situations and were the support for us in everything. My tongue cannot describe their dedication to us." In 2021, Refugees Welcome Hounslow won the Community Heart Award in the One Hounslow Community Awards for "an outstanding contribution to their local community, supporting neighbours, creating community spirit and strength."



Pat Davies

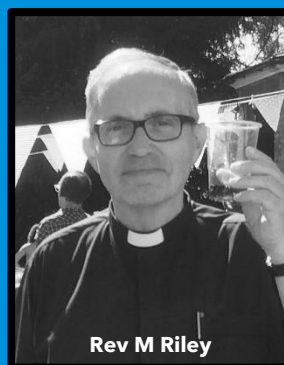
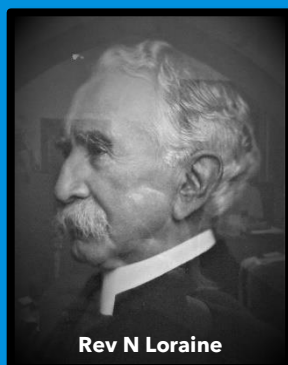
We are immensely proud of Pat Davies, one of the longest standing members of our congregation. Pat (98) was awarded the Légion d'Honneur, the highest French order of merit today for her work during WWII. Pat Davies was one of the "Bletchley Girls", working at listening stations around the coast, eavesdropping on German naval radio transmissions and relaying the content to the code breakers at Bletchley Park. The French Ambassador said the award was given for her "bravery and remarkable contributions to the liberation of our country." Pat has also been granted The Freedom of the Borough by Hounslow Council. This is the highest honour that a council can bestow and the tradition is maintained as a means whereby public recognition is given to the recipients as an expression of the highest esteem in which they are held by the council and people of the borough.





The Vicars of St Paul's Church 1872-2022

Rev Nevison Loraine	1870-1917
Rev A G C Stamp	1918-1927
Rev W J Simmons	1927-1940
Rev J E Scarlett	1940-1946
Rev John Warren	1947-1966
Rev M Grime	1966-1988
Rev Michael Riley	1989-2022



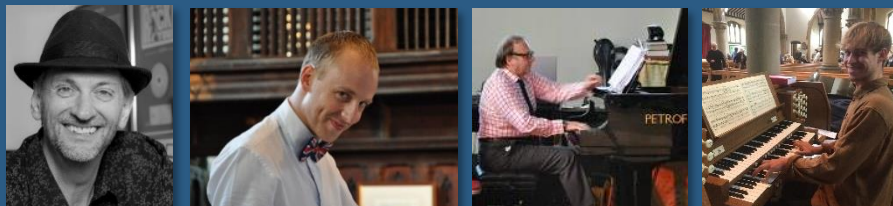
St Paul's Grove Park: a thriving part of the local community



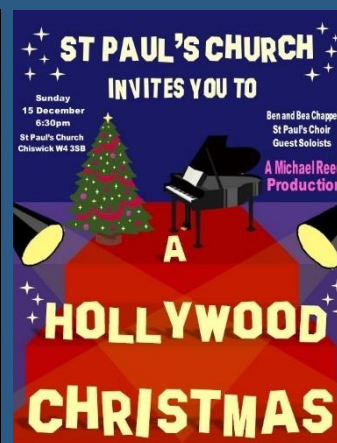
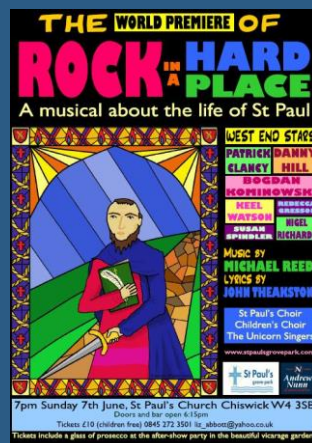
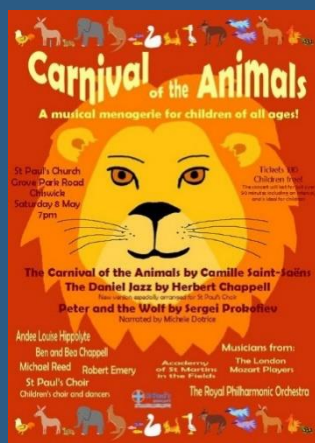
Music at St Paul's church

From its very beginnings, music has been of huge importance to St Paul's. We are fortunate that architect Henry Currey gave the church an excellent acoustic, meaning that it is a true delight to sing, play and listen in. Over the last 150 years, thousands of singers and musicians have come together here to make music, both for the glory of God and for the enjoyment of the Grove Park community.

We have been lucky to have some superb organists in recent years; pictured below are Mike Dixon, Robert Emery, Mike Reed and our current organist Tom Torley. Mike Dixon composed the beautiful liturgical music for the *Gloria* and *Agnus Dei* which we sing every Sunday. Other awesome organists have included Lionel Harrison, Ian Stephenson, Franklyn Gellnick, Michael Chapman and Patryk Korczak.



Some of the musical highlights of the last thirty years have been: the Second Sunday Concerts: a series of free concerts on Sunday evenings featuring local musicians; *It's Cool in the Furnace*, *Songs from Godspell* and *Joseph and his Technicolour Dreamcoat* directed by Mike Dixon in the 1990s; the Grovestock Festival; *A Dickens of a Christmas*; *60 Glorious Years: A Jubilee Pageant*; *Rock in a Hard Place*: a musical written by John Theakston and Mike Reed, celebrating the life of St Paul which premiered at our church in 2015; *I Knew a Simple Soldier Boy* which we staged in 2014 and 2018 to mark the centenaries of the start and end of WWI; *Carnival of the Animals*; *Daniel Jazz*; *Dear Santa*; *Joy to the World*; *An 80's Christmas* and *A Hollywood Christmas*. And finally, our most recent exuberant extravaganza, *Hear the People Sing* which celebrates the 150th anniversary of St Paul's Church.



Acknowledgments



This history has been compiled, researched and written by Catherine Jessop.

With thanks to Val Bott, Frances Eldridge, Izzy Jessop Patricia Mann and James Wisdom.

Also, much appreciation is due to the sterling work and websites of the Brentford and Chiswick History Society, the Grove Park Group and the Chiswick Book Festival.



The St Paul's logo was designed by Tim Makower, and updated for the 150 anniversary.