

## Welcome to the Parish Church of St. John, Upper Hopton

This church was built in the mid-nineteenth century by the Durham architects, Bonomi and Cory. The building was consecrated for divine worship on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1846. It is a beautiful church with several points of interest.



As you enter the church through the South porch, you will find yourself facing the font. This was installed in 1896. A commemoration stone notes that this font was donated by the “first person to be baptized in it.” The font rests on a plinth placed underneath in 1966. Turning to your left, in the Tower, is a three-light window dated 1871 by the famous Hardman of Birmingham, (A.W. Pugin designed many of their windows). The subject matter of this window is the anointing of Jesus’s feet by Mary recounted in John 12: 1-8.



One of the oldest windows in the church is in the west window, at the end of the north aisle. This depiction of the two apostles, St. Mark and St. Luke was originally part of a set of four lights placed in the east window. It is an early example of painted glass by Hardman of Birmingham, from 1845, the year the firm began producing windows. Today, the depictions of St. Matthew and St. John, which were part of this set, are in the vestry behind the organ.

As you move along the north aisle you will notice a simple glass window, entitled *Lux Luceat* (for light and memory) designed by a Father Windley and installed in 1914. Next to this window, in the third bay of the north aisle is a window illustrating Matthew 19:14, “Suffer little children ...” It was designed by Talbot of Leeds at the turn of the century. Close to this window, you will find the original pulpit which was first built into the north wall of the chancel. It now serves as stand for prayer candles. Between the two windows one will also see a memorial to those who lost their lives in World War two. It is constructed from an 18<sup>th</sup> century chest and is the oldest piece of furnishing in the church.

Turning to the south side of the Church one sees three impressive windows. The most easterly depicts Matthew 7:7, “knock and it shall be opened unto you.” In the next bay illustrates the parable of the virgins from Matthew 25:1-13. These two windows were designed by Powells of Leeds and installed in 1893. The third window in the south wall is the Millennium Window, designed and made by Ann and Vincent Seaborne and funded by the community. This window celebrates continuity and renewal with the family at the centre of the life cycle. St. John is prominent on the right, depicted as a young traveler. It was completed in 2000



The pews and other furnishings of the church were originally designed by the architects, Bonomi and Cory who built the church. The pews in the main body of the church were replaced, beginning in 1926, with the present linen fold pews. These pews were made by a local Upper Hopton craftsman,



Harry Moody. The cost of each pew was covered by donations from local families. Their names are on the commemorative plaques attached to the pews. In 2000 the church was reordered. Trevor Davison, refashioned pews by Moody into new communion rails, chairs altar and altar rail for use in the Nave altar area. The organ at St. John's was purchased from Forster and Andrews of Hull for £210

which included carriage to Mirfield Station, in 1861. At the station the organ was met by local farmers with horse and carts who transported the organ up the hill to St. Johns. An electronic blower was installed in 1951 (before this the bellows were pumped by the hands of many willing volunteers). In 1981 the organ was cleaned and refurbished. An electric action was also provided at this time, as the mechanical actions were very worn.

Beyond the Nave altar is the Chancel which remains much as it was when designed in 1846. The screen separating the chancel from the nave was part of the original structure, though the Rood and Christus were added in 1951. The choir stalls are the original ones designed by Bonomi and Cory. The floor tiles are probably Minton, and are dated 1844. Beginning on the north side of the chancel is a painted panel depicting St. John, the



Evangelist's arrival on the Isle of Patmos and was designed by J.Eadie Reid of London. The painted panels beneath the mural are fine examples of arts and craft design. At the east end of the church are a painted set of four angels, two set on each side of the east window. The angels on each side of the altar in red were painted by members of Batley College of Art in 1916, while the ones above were by Reid. The small reredos behind the altar contains an *Agnus Dei* (The Lamb of God illustrated with a halo and carrying a cross and banner). Above the altar is the East Window, a four light window designed by Powells of Leeds. From left to right the window depicts: "The Agony, in the Garden," "The Crucifixion," "The Resurrection," and "St. Peter and St. Paul at the Sepulchre." The window was installed in 1892 and dedicated to the first vicar of St. John, Revd. G.P. Kerr.



On the south side of the chancel the windows are glazed with stained glass with stamped floral designs from the studio of Hardman in Birmingham, and are original to the building. A panel inset on the right side of the eastern most window depicts the institution of the first Vicar of Hopton. Above this window is a panel which

depicts the New Jerusalem, both paintings again from Reid's design. Fitted into a panel between the two windows, in a gilded and arched frame is a relief sculpture of the Madonna and child, probably designed in the studio of Hardman of Birmingham. Adjacent to this sculpture is another panel depicting the consolidation of the Saxon and Italian Missions to England in the Synod of Whitby presided over by King Oswy. To the right of this painting, above the window is a painting of the ruin of Whitby Abbey. Again, both paintings were designed by Reid as part of a scheme of ten paintings for the chancel, which was never completed.

**For more information please see *A History of the Parish Church of St. John, Upper Hopton* by Richard Turner.**