

A HISTORY OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, ILKESTON

The part of Ilkeston where the church now stands saw a substantial increase in its population in the second half of the nineteenth century. This was largely due to an increase in coal mining activity and associated economic growth in the area including the arrival of the Great Northern Railway in the 1870's. At that time there was only one parish in the town and only one parish church.

Because of these developments there were moves to establish Missions in various locations throughout the 1860's and 1870's and this matured into plans for a new church for the area. In 1880 Fr J H Buchanan was asked to take temporary care of the parish of Ilkeston but he preferred to focus on the building up of a separate parish. He was instrumental in obtaining the site for the church, which was donated by the Duke of Rutland (who held the Lordship of the Manor of Ilkeston), and in driving through the building of the church. The original scheme was for the erection of a nave and south aisle and the total cost was around £2000 which included a further gift from the Duke of Rutland of £500 and a gift of from Mr E M Mundy (of Shipley Hall) also of £500. A further £500 was raised locally. The foundation stone, which lies at the base of the northern pillar of the chancel arch, was laid in July 1883.

There was subsequently pressure from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for the completion of the church otherwise there was no guarantee of a permanent endowment of the living. Further sums were raised, including a considerable sum by an appeal from one hundred colliers which was published in the Church Times. The building was duly completed with the addition of the chancel. The total cost had been about £5,500. The architects had been Messrs Evans and Jolly of Nottingham and the builder was Mr F Shaw of Ilkeston.

The consecration of the completed church took place on 21st November 1887 and the district was constituted as a separate ecclesiastical parish in 1888. The building comprises a nave with north and south aisles and was constructed in coursed rock-faced sandstone with ashlar window surrounds and is in the gothic style.

There are a number of subsequent developments to the church which deserve special mention. The first significant addition was the building of an organ, which survives to the present day. This was built by Messrs Harrison and Harrison in 1909 at a cost of £600. It is a two manual instrument with 15 speaking stops and 4 couplers. An electric blower was fitted in 1942 and this was replaced with a new blower in 2013. The organ case is of wood panelling with wooden framed glass doors at the front with wooden boarding on the sides and rear, with access doors.

One of the glories of the church has to be the east window. This was installed by Fr J E H Binney in memory of his wife who died in 1911. The window shows a Nativity scene across five stepped lights, with the Virgin and Child in the centre light with the Adoration of the Shepherds in the two left lights and Adoration of the Magi in the right lights. In the background is a view of Bethlehem which includes Holy Trinity Church showing the five light east window. It was completed in 1912 and is perhaps the church's most significant architectural feature. It is by Bernard Sleight of the Birmingham School of Art and shows the influence of Christopher Whall. Sleight undertook a small number of stained glass commissions and this is one of his most notable. The commission was carried out by St George's Guild, for whom Sleight was the main designer, and they also produced a large cast bronze tablet mentioning that the window was a gift of the congregation and in memory of Beatrice Binney.

Another important feature, the rood screen, was erected in 1924 in memory of Fr Binney, who had left the parish in 1912 but had been remembered by the parish with affection.

The church buildings had included a school, Holy Trinity Infants School, and a church hall which were located on Factory Lane opposite the church itself. There was also a clergy house on an adjoining site with frontage onto Cotmanhay Road. The church hall was destroyed by fire in 1971 and the church school was closed in the same year and the entire site was subsequently sold. At this time a considerable amount of restoration and repair work was required to the church and the decision was made to close it down and unite the parish with St Mary's. As a result of some generous bequests which enabled the work to be carried out the decision to close was reversed. The work lasted for a number of years and was eventually completed in 1981 at a cost of around £20,000. It was considered that a new church hall was becoming increasingly necessary if church life was to continue. It was therefore decided to split the church into two separate areas with the west end of the nave becoming the hall with the inclusion of a kitchen and toilet facilities. The area of the church building for worship was therefore substantially restricted but was considered adequate for the smaller congregation. This was and continues to be a workable solution.

With the future of the building more secure, the diocese demonstrated further support for the parish with the building of a new Vicarage on part of the site of the old Clergy House.

Since the millennium, and especially over the last five years or so, money has been spent on upgrading the toilet and kitchen facilities and in improving the roof, provision of rainwater goods, drainage and lightning system. The current state of repair of the building is therefore sound and its facilities adequate.