



8. The Hatchments

The church has ten 'hatchments'. These are diamond shaped funeral plaques bearing the coat of arms of the deceased person's family, and are an important part of our local history. Traditionally these were displayed over the principal entrance to the family home for one year after the death, and then placed in the parish church.

9. The Stained Glass Windows

The East Window was added as part of the extension of the Chancel in 1880 and from left to right tells the story of the Annunciation, when the archangel Gabriel informs the young Mary that she is to be the mother of Jesus, and the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. In keeping with the dedication of this Church to St Mary the Virgin, only she is pictured in every scene, dressed in a blue robe.



The South Aisle Window is the memorial to the men and women of St Mary's congregation who fell during the Second World War (the village memorial is outside Brookside Methodist Church), and the lower panels bear their names and the insignia of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

The main part of the window shows Christ in glory, and perhaps is intended to represent the next stage in the gospel story following on from the panels in the East Window — ie the Ascension. Christ's wounds are visible in his hands and feet and his is flanked by two angels. This window was made and installed by the Lux Studio which until very recently traded locally in East Barnet Road.



10. The Side Chapel

This part of the church is set aside for private prayer. You may wish to spend some time sitting quietly here at the end of your visit.

You are invited to leave your prayer requests on the small notice-board, and these will be offered in our Sunday services and each day at Morning and Evening Prayer (9.30am and 5.15pm). You are also welcome to light a candle to represent your thoughts and prayers.



The font is the place of baptism, marking the beginning of the journey of faith. You may wish to consider where you are on your own personal journey, remembering that God goes with you.

The icon of the **Virgin of Vladimir** (pictured above) provides another focus for reflection: you may like to read the short meditation on the cards available, or use one of the prayers below:

Kindle in our hearts, O God
the flame of love which never ceases,
That it may burn in us, giving light to others.
May we shine for ever in your temple,
Set on fire with your eternal light,
Even your Son Jesus Christ,
Our Saviour and our Redeemer. Amen.

Eternal God and Father,
you create and redeem us by the power of your love:
Guide and strengthen us by your Spirit,
that we may give ourselves in love and service
to one another and to you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Heal us, O God, from all our afflictions
and keep us steadfast in your love;
Bind up our wounds, raise us from death,
and lead us to fullness of life;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Eternal Light, shine in our hearts,
Eternal Goodness, deliver us from evil,
Eternal Power, be our support,
Eternal Wisdom, scatter the darkness of our ignorance,
Eternal Pity, have mercy upon us;
that with all our heart and mind and soul and strength
we may seek your face and be brought by your infinite mercy to
your holy presence; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



FOR MANY CENTURIES the top of Church Hill has been recognised by local people as a 'holy place', but it has been used as a site of Christian worship since the end of the 11th century. In 1080, the Benedictine monks of the Abbey at St Albans founded a small chapel to serve the community under the jurisdiction of the Abbot of St Albans, and dedicated it the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. Since then, each generation has played a part in shaping this beautiful building (the oldest in the London Borough of Barnet) whose ancient stones have been hallowed by centuries of prayer and silence.

Today, visitors to St Mary's continue to be refreshed and inspired in this sacred space, and often experience a strong sense of God's presence and peace.

THIS BRIEF TOUR BEGINS AT THE LYCH-GATE

1. The Lych-gate and Yew Trees

Lych-gates are a common feature of ancient churchyards, and were originally intended to provide shelter for pall-bearers and coffins whilst waiting for the priest to arrive. The lych-gate was first erected here in 1872, and rebuilt in 1991. It bears the legend 'Both High and Low, Rich and Poor together'. The stile was installed to allow access when the gates were closed, preventing animals from wandering into the churchyard and becoming ill by eating the leaves from the yew trees which line the church path. These majestic trees are about 300 years old. In the south west corner of the churchyard there is a young yew tree, taken as a cutting from the Eastling Yew in Kent, believed to have been alive at the time of Christ's birth. It was planted here in the year 2000 to mark the beginning of the third millennium of Christianity.

2. The Churchyard and Memorials

As you approach the Church you will see five grand obelisk memorials to your left, in memory of the **Grove** family, and ahead is the grand memorial to **John Sharpe** dating from 1756. Whilst their memorials are impressive, we know virtually nothing about their lives. Elsewhere in the churchyard are the tombs of **Major General George Prevost**, Governor of Canada 1811-1815, **Sir William Richmond Cotton**, Lord Mayor of London in 1875 and **Sir Charles Houghton Clarke**, whose house is now Oakhill College across the park. (see picture right)



When you have finished looking at the Church you might like to spend some time walking in the churchyard.

3. The Bell Tower and South Porch

The **Bell Tower** was built in 1828, originally free-standing from the rest of the building. There are three bells, recast in 1961 from the two original bells cast at the Whitechapel Foundry in 1861. As you enter the church, note the **neo-Norman stonework** above the door.

Inside, above the red-painted doors hangs a crucifix, made by the Wild Goose Studio in Kinsale. It is a replica of a 12th century Byzantine '**Christus Rex**', the earliest form of crucifix showing Christ crowned as King and enthroned on the cross. The original is in Glenstal Abbey, a Benedictine monastery in south west Ireland. Placed at the entrance to the Church, this cross reminds us of our ancient Benedictine roots and the reason our forbears built this church: to proclaim the gospel of Christ crucified, risen and glorified.



To the right is a small water-stoup containing holy water taken from the font. On entering the building some dip their fingers into the water and make the sign of the cross on their forehead as a reminder of their baptism—their point of entry into the Christian Church.

Either side of the doorway you will see graffiti from years gone by: initials, scratches, markings and pictures carved into the stone work. The picture above shows the 'cartoon' of a man carved into the left door jamb. There is no simple way of finding out when these markings were made, but this figure's collar may suggest the period around the English Civil War of the 17th century. That, however, is no more than speculation. On the right hand side of the doorway, amongst many other markings, there is a small square cross, which since 2003 has been used as the logo for St Mary's.

4. The North Wall & Norman Windows

The **north wall**, painted white on the outside and illuminated at night, is the oldest part of St Mary's Church, and all that remains of the first stone church on this site built in 1080AD. It is built from rubble and lime plaster, with stone used around the windows only.



The 3 **Norman windows** would not have been glazed originally (the word 'window' comes from the Saxon 'wind-eye') and the coloured glass fragments which have been used in the windows are all that is left of the church's medieval glass. Originally the church would have been much smaller, probably ending at the line of the present Chancel step and pulpit. As the stone tablet by the north door states, this ancient wall was damaged during the Second World War and restored.

The small niche in the north wall usually holds an icon of **St Benedict** who founded the Benedictine order.

5. The Pews

Pews are a relatively recently addition to churches. The original single-cell church would have had stone benches around the walls, with open space in the main part of the building. The current pews date back only to 1868 or thereabouts, and replaced box-pews. In the west end of the Churchyard is the grave of Elizabeth Press, 'one time pew opener of this church' who died in 1877 aged 80. High and Low together indeed.

6. The Chancel & Sanctuary

The Chancel was built around 1400, and there are records of its repair and enlargement in 1632 at the instigation of Sir Robert Berkeley. If you look on the floor to the south side of the chancel, under the **Bishop's Chair**, you can see the empty space where a brass bearing the Berkeley family crest was once positioned. For many years this was the only remaining brass in the Church, but it too has now 'disappeared'. All that we have today is a rubbing (pictured right). The chancel was dominated by heavy Victorian choirstalls, which were removed in 2000 to create a more open and flexible space. On the window ledge on the north side is a statue brought back from the shrine of **Our Lady of Walsingham** in Norfolk. Members of St Mary's make their pilgrimage once a year.



The **Organ** is a particularly fine instrument for such a small Church, and was installed in 1920, the gift of the Vernon family in memory of their only son, killed in action during the First World War.

Hanging above the chancel space is a wrought iron **Corona** (crown) installed in 2000 and symbolising the kingship of Christ. It is made up of three separate crowns intertwined: the crown of thorns, the crown of life (symbolised by the vine) and the golden crown of victory.

7. The Altar Frontals

Both altar frontals were commissioned for St Mary's on painted silk, and the work of Yvonne Bell, a contemporary Christian artist and vestment maker. The **main altar** bears the vine, representing Jesus Christ (described in John's gospel as the 'true vine') with the centre panel echoing the roundel at the top of the East Window with the monograph IHC, derived from the greek spelling of 'Jesus'. In the seasons of Lent and Advent the frontal is reversed to reveal a design in purples and blues with the pelican motif at the centre (pictured right). This is a traditional medieval image portraying Christ as a mother bird who sheds her own blood to give life to her young.



The frontal on the altar in the side chapel has lilies in place of the vine, representing the Virgin Mary, and the reverse bears the first line of Mary's Song, the Magnificat: My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord.