

# ST BARNABAS CHURCH

## RAINBOW HILL, WORCESTER

The cost of the **wooden panelling** in the east end sanctuary was contributed by the congregation in 1960 to mark the 75th anniversary of the church, together with the president's chair behind the nave altar and the sedilia in the sanctuary.

The Communion Plate consists of a silver Communion Cup and Paten given by Archdeacon Lea in 1883 and made by John Aldwinckle & James Slater of London in the Elizabethan style to mark the creation of the Parish of Rainbow Hill, and a later silver Chalice and Paten dated 1902/3 and made by the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Company. A Ciborium made by George Hart of Chipping Campden, which replaced an earlier one stolen during a break-in in 2004.

**Pulpit** of 1890 by Brazier of Bromsgrove designed by Mr Haywood of Rainbow Hill and decorative design by Mr Albert Hodder. The brass bookstand is by Messrs Singer & Co. of Frome; the gift of Mr D W Barker

### VESTMENTS:

**White Chasuble** with gold Y-shaped orphrey and stole to match given, in 1951, by the Revd J E Robertson and made by Mrs Fry of Bristol who had earlier worked Archbishop William Temple's Cope.

**Red Chasuble** and stole to match given by Mr George Austin in memory of his father and mother and sister Lily in 1955.

**Green Chasuble** with green velvet Y-shaped orphrey and stole to match, given in 1951, and made by Mrs J E Robertson.

A modern set of four Chasubles in gold, green, red and purple with stoles to match purchased from Hayes and Finch in 2005 from monies received as "gifts given in memory".



### THE PARISH OF ST BARNABAS

The Parish of St Barnabas was originally part of the Parish of Claines, whose parish church dates from the time when St Wulfstan was bishop (1062-1095), and which stretched from Bevere to Hindlip, and from the Foregate to Droitwich: a sparsely populated area of thick forest and swamp and which, in 1553, numbered no more than 550 people. However, by 1873 Claines had 17,000 inhabitants. This led, in the first place (1830) to building, in what is now St George's Square, a Chapel of Ease dedicated to St George, and which was replaced subsequently (1895) by the present fine church in the Square. In 1862 the church of St Stephen was dedicated followed by Holy Trinity Shrub Hill (1864) and since demolished, St Mary's (1875) since declared redundant and converted into flats, and finally St Barnabas in 1885.

### THE BUILDING

The building and dedication of St Barnabas on St Barnabas Day 11th June 1885 (cost £4,000) was the culmination of development that began in the area with the creation of the ecclesiastical parish of Rainbow Hill in 1883. The architect was Ernest Augustus Day of Worcester, and the church built of brick and Bromsgrove Stone (Bath stone being employed for the windows) by Brazier & Weaver of Bromsgrove. In 1908 the vestry (cost £300), designed by the architect C Ford Whitcombe and built by the firm of Bromage and Evans, was added. The style is that of Early English and although the exterior is somewhat unprepossessing the interior is quite remarkable in its simple aesthetic quality.

### THE FONT

As one enters, notice first the FONT; an object of outstanding quality. Made of Painswick stone with alabaster strap on York stone case enhanced by three separate sculpted carvings by William Forsyth

of the Tything Worcester depicting Christ blessing the children, his Baptism, and Presentation in the Temple. The cost (in 1885) £30.11.4 (£30.55!!!) raised, according to the brass plate on the plinth, by the children of the Sunday School. The font cover of wood, which has lost its top, was made by Houghton Bros of Worcester in 1939.

### **MEDALLIONS**

Further work by William Forsyth can be seen above the arcading in the Nave in the form of six MEDALLIONS revealing the carved features of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Barnabas and Paul. These were paid for by Mr D W Barker (cost £13)

### **THE SCREEN**

The beautifully carved wood screen was designed by Hill Parker Architects of Worcester and installed in September 1921 (cost: £362) as a memorial to the two sons of Mr & Mrs Gibbs, and given by them. According to the dedication on a brass plate nearby they were killed in action within a few days of each other in the 1914-18 War: 2/ Lieut Gilbert Fincher Gibbs on 28.4.17 aged 25 in France and Archibald Edward Gibbs on 25.4.17 aged 22 in the Balkans. It has yet to be discovered who made this excellent example of woodcraft.

### **CHURCHWARDENS' STAVES**

The pair of churchwardens' staves was given in memory of Mr Albert Langford by his widow and family in 1970.

### **MEMORIALS**

The Cook Memorial tablet on the wooden screen by the organ states that the organ blower was given by the parents of Gordon Francis Cook and was executed by the Bromsgrove Guild of Arts and Crafts

A further Memorial on the North Aisle wall to Mrs Wheeley Lea (a member of the famous Lea & Perrins—Worcestershire Sauce—families) an early benefactor of the new parish, being a member of the Claines congregation and having lived in Lansdowne Crescent.

### **THE STAINED & PAINTED GLASS WINDOWS**

The window **Christ the Good Shepherd** in the Lady Chapel, executed by Henry Horwood (1890) and given by Mr D W Barker in memory of his wife Ellen, was installed in 1889.

The centre light in the East Window, **Our Risen Lord**, above the high altar (maker/artist unknown) was given by Mrs Margaret Bird in memory of her husband, George, in 1894.

The two other windows, **St Barnabas and St Paul** were given by their son Ernest (later Sir Ernest Bird) in 1929 at a cost of £100 each in memory of his parents. The scene shown below St Barnabas is where he and St Paul are called to start their great work (Acts xiii.2). That below St Paul is where he healed the man crippled from birth (Acts xiv.10). According to Pevsner's *Worcestershire* these windows are attributed to Pearce & Cutler of Birmingham 1929 (ref: p.710).

Ernest Bird was educated at King's School Worcester and at 14 years old was involved in a shooting accident resulting in the loss of his left arm. He survived this episode in his life successfully, becoming a solicitor and company director, and finally became the President of The Law Society, receiving a knighthood in 1944. The scenes in the windows seem to be an apt choice in view of his disability.

### **OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST**

The **Mothers' Union Banner** in the Lady Chapel was made by the Benedictine Nuns of Stanbrook Abbey.

The **Altar Table in the Lady Chapel** was made by the Bromsgrove Guild of Arts and Crafts in 1953.

The metal **Sculpture of the Virgin Mary**, by Paul Westwood, was given by Bishop Perowne College in 2005.

The sculpted **head of a black man** in mail headdress is a copy of the head of a statue of St Maurice the patron saint of Magdeburg, Germany to be found in the cathedral there, and presented to St Barnabas by the people of the parish of St Paul & St Laurence, Magdeburg