



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release: 1st February 2014

Celebrating 150 years – Consecration of St Paul's Church, Wokingham (1864 – 2014)

2014 sees the church of St Paul, Wokingham celebrating 150 years of worship since its Service of Consecration on 23rd July, 1864 by the Bishop of Oxford, Rt Revd Samuel Wilberforce.

The church was built at the request of, and endowed to the people of Wokingham in memory of his first wife, Emily, by Mr John Walter III of Bearwood - barrister, MP and proprietor of *The Times* newspaper between 1847 and 1894.

There are four main pillars of St Paul's 150th Anniversary celebrations during 2014:

1) Four Big Weekends, each with a broad theme, will take place over four weekends in March, June, July and October

a) The Opening Weekend March 15th & 16th

Saturday: all day: working on the Churchyard and Church to spring clean for all that is to follow.

Saturday Lunch: Lent Soup Lunch in the Parish Rooms provided by the Church Social Committee

Saturday pm: Party for all Ages in the Parish Rooms

Sunday am: Mass @ 9.30am

Sunday evening: Choral Evensong & Sermon with guest preacher, The Venerable Norman Russell, formerly The Archdeacon of Berkshire (retired Easter 2013).

b) Patronal & Choir Weekend: June 28th & 29th

Saturday: (tbc)

Sunday: Mass at 9.30am

Sunday evening: Choral Evensong with Guest preacher, Fr Dr Peter Day of Christ Church, Reading and past Choir members invited back to join in. If you once sang with St Paul's Choir and have not yet received an invitation to return for this special event, please call the Parish Office on 0118 979 2122.



PRESS RELEASE

- c) Foundation Weekend: July 19th & 20th
Saturday: "Love Wokingham" - acts of service and kindness in the Community
Sunday: Mass at 9.30 am with the Bishop of Oxford, The Rt Revd John Pritchard Preaching and Presiding.
Sunday Lunch: Parish BBQ
Sunday evening: 6.15pm Choral Evensong with Guest Preacher (tbc).
- d) Church Family Weekend: October 18th & 19th
Saturday: with a focus on Baptism in the Church we hope to invite back people who have either moved away or stopped coming regularly.
Saturday: all day: The Big Draw Art Weekend: Fun for all the Family, Church/schools art workshops (tbc)
Saturday pm: Social event (tbc)
Sunday: 9.30 Mass
Sunday Lunch: Parish Lunch
Sunday evening: 6.15pm Choral Evensong with Guest Preacher, The Archdeacon of Berkshire, The Venerable Olivia Graham

2. Guest Preachers at Choral Evensong

At nine Evensongs during the year we are inviting back old friends of St Paul's and current ones too, to preach at 6.15pm. There will also be a chance to meet our special guest over drinks either before or after the service. The dates are:

- January 19th - Bishop Andrew Proud
- February 16th - Rev'd Roy Burgess
- March 16th – The Venerable Norman Russell
- May 18th - Preb Peter Rapsey
- June 29th - Fr Dr Peter Day
- July 20th - Fr Richard Lamey
- September 21st - Fr Tony Kemp
- October 19th – The Venerable Archdeacon, Olivia Graham
- November 16th - Fr John Connell

Evensong is one of the hidden gems of the Anglican tradition, and is something for which St Paul's is particularly well known. As such, it is appropriate that Evensong should feature strongly in the 2014 programme of celebrations and St Paul's is particularly pleased to be welcoming back so many former members of our clergy.



PRESS RELEASE

For further information, please see the website www.stpauls-wokingham.org.uk or call the Parish Office on 0118 979 2122.

3. Lighting in Church

Lighting is the church's big focus for change during 2014. In the first instance, we have repaired where necessary but the main purpose will be to create a new lighting system. Working with the Oxford Diocese and English Heritage, we will be concentrating on what the new lighting system needs to do and on raising the funds to make the lighting in Church more effective and more impressive – a system fit for purpose in the century ahead.

4. Other Projects

There are a range of other smaller projects that have already been achieved like the 150th Anniversary Church Prayer, the logo, wall calendar, as well as others still in hand like the refurbishment of the Children's Corner, creating new church vistas, confirming a date for Beating the Bounds, welcoming the Wokingham Arts Trail in September as a new venue, and many more activities still to be finalised.

Fr Richard said, "So, 2014 is now upon us and it is very exciting! We shall make this a year to remember, a year in which we build stronger links with our community, restore old friendships and move confidently into the future God has prepared for us."

For more information and to keep up to date with our progress please go to the website www.stpauls-wokingham.gov.uk or call the Parish Office on 0118 979 2122.

<ENDS>



PRESS RELEASE

Notes for Editors:

Please see email attachments for additional files (as well as a copy of this Press Release) listed below:

- 3 x St Paul's logos in black & white [1] and colour [2] (.jpg files)
- Logo guidelines for use (.pdf)

To find out what's on at St Paul's, go to <http://www.stpauls-wokingham.org.uk>.

Background

The principal dates in the history of the church are:

- **1862** Foundation stone laid by Flora, the second Mrs John Walter III
- **1864** Consecration of the church and churchyard on 23rd July by Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford
- **1867** Choir was introduced
- **1870** Organ moved from north aisle to entry via Chancel – organist sitting with back to the choir
- **1873** South aisle opened on Whitsun with new pitched roof
- **1874** North aisle opened 24th January increasing capacity seating to 528. Works carried out by Woodyer. Service of Dedication led by Rt Rev John Fielder Mackarness, Bishop of Oxford (1870-1889)
- **1892** The vestry enlarged to its present size. Decorations unveiled on the chancel arch and west wall and new Vestry dedicated on 24th January by the Bishop of Reading, the Rt Rev James Leslie Randall
- **1906** Carving round the Aumbry dates from this time
- **1938** The original Walter family pew converted to the present Walter Chapel
- **1950** The Lady Chapel established in the north aisle, a memorial to Revd Henry Major Walter (1850-1931), son of John Walter III
- **1951** The Church awarded Grade II* listed building status (English Heritage) and the churchyard extension was consecrated
- **1964** Redecoration of the Church for 100th Anniversary celebrations. The highly decorated East Wall, with its *Commandments* and the *Lord's Prayer* were obliterated. The Walter Chapel was completely refurbished as a small area for informal prayer and week day offices



PRESS RELEASE

- **1987** Spire damaged by hurricane and non-ferrous bars installed to replace the rusted iron originals. The vertical joints in the stonework were re-pointed at the same time. The Weather-vane was re-gilded and the lightning conductor was renewed and bonded to the bell frame. The Lych Gate was awarded Grade II listing by English Heritage
- **1991** North aisle was re-roofed with *Sarnafil* membrane (the original lead having been stolen and subsequent *Nuralite* covering having deteriorated)
- **1994** The Aumbry Safe was stolen and the original wooden doors were damaged beyond repair. This was replaced with a purpose-built safe and the steel doors were covered with brass doors decorated with chalice and host motif across both doors.
- **1996** Original Willis Organ is replaced. Disused organ case removed to North Transept. Lady Chapel re-sited in the South aisle.
- **1997** - South aisle and Vestry re-roofed with Sarnafil
- **2002** - The Chancel and Sanctuary were re-decorated
- **2004** - The church Spire was struck with lightning. The tower and bells were destroyed by the subsequent fire. Restoration began a year later and was completed in January 2006. Funds were raised to repair the upper pinnacles during the restoration of the stonework and install a more comprehensive lightning protection system.
- **2006** The Rt Rev Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford led a Service of Re-dedication following the restoration of the Tower and Bells.

St Paul's Church was built by John Walter III, entirely at his own expense, during 1862-1864. It was consecrated by Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, on 23rd July 1864. Almost all of the basic fabric of the church dates from the middle of Queen Victoria's reign, and is a product of that one period. It was built 'in the Decorated style of the 14th and 15th centuries' by Henry Woodyer. It is a Grade II* listed building – English Heritage (1951).

The church was designed by Henry Woodyer of Grafham, near Guildford. He is less well known than other architects of his day. Woodyer did not consider himself a professional and would not advertise for work. Rather, as a 'high churchman' he preferred to receive his commissions by recommendation and throughout his career, Woodyer saw his architectural work as a means of serving the church.



PRESS RELEASE

While at Oxford he was influenced by (although was never a member of) the Oxford Movement and used decorated detail in the Gothic style as an appropriate offering to the glory of God, in high contrast to the prevailing industrial architecture of the day, much of it of superb engineering quality, but essentially built as a monument to Man's achievements. The late John Betjeman wrote about Woodyer with approval, quoting St Paul's, Wokingham as a good example of his work.

Among the most interesting ornaments in the church is the Stained Glass Windows representing scenes from the life of St Paul, by Hardman of Birmingham. The original Willis organ was replaced in the late twentieth century and a new peel of bells was cast from the original broken bells which came down destroyed by the subsequent fire following a lightning strike to the spire in 2004.

Context for the building of a new church

At the census of 1861, the population of Wokingham was 4144 and the area was developing quickly. The railway had arrived; the line from Guildford to Reading had been built in 1849, and the direct line to London via Staines had followed in 1856. The Town Hall was opened in 1860, the same year as the Baptist Church had been re- built. There was also a Primitive Methodist Chapel in the town, and much restoration of All Saints Church was in progress.

Contact:

Fr Richard Lamey
Rector of St Paul,
Wokingham
0118 327 9116

Fr Patrick King
Associate Priest
0118 977 3397

Parish Office
0118 979 2122
office@stpauls-
wokingham.org.uk

The Communications Team

0118 979 2122 | office@stpauls.org.uk | www.stpauls-wokingham.org.uk
Parish Office, St Paul's Parish Rooms, Reading Road, Wokingham RG41 1EH

The Parish of Wokingham St Paul

St Nicholas, Emmbrook † St Paul, Wokingham † Woollahill Community Church
