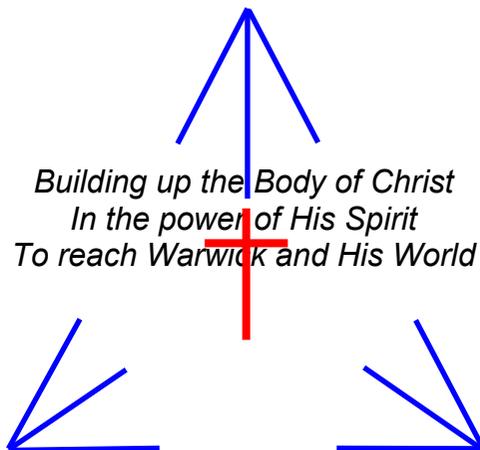


**St Paul's Church**  
*by the Racecourse*  
**Friars Street, Warwick**



***A brief history and guide***

***A brief history***

The population of Warwick grew rapidly in the early 1800s when the opening of the canal enabled many new industries to develop in the local area. The work-force was housed in the newly-erected streets in the western parts of the town, such as Crompton Street, Woodhouse Street, and Queen's Square. As the population grew, the churchyards of St. Mary and St Nicholas became full and in 1823 both churches petitioned the Bishop of Worcester for extra burial space. (The Coventry diocese was only created in 1918.)

As a result, on 23rd July 1824 ground was consecrated in Friars Street and later in the same year a cemetery chapel was built. This was known as St. Mary's Episcopal Chapel, being served by St. Mary's, and was used exclusively for burials.

Then in 1842 it was proposed that a new Free Church should be built. In 1844 the Parish of St. Paul's was formed out of the western part of St. Mary's Parish. The church was completed in the same year and consecrated on 26th July 1844 by the Bishop of Worcester, the Rt. Revd. Henry Pepys. The completed church embraced the original Cemetery Chapel which became the south transept (which Nikolaus Pevsner describes as "abnormally long").

A tradition has it that St Paul's was the "servants church" for St Mary's and that the times of services started after and finished before St Mary's to ensure that the servants did not inconvenience their masters. This may be purely apocryphal and has not been confirmed from records but it perhaps reveals something of the nature of St Paul's - a church built for the working classes of the West End. It might also explain why there is nothing in the architecture to draw attention to the church and why there is only a discrete bell tower sufficient to hold a solitary bell. However whatever the truth or whatever the reason, this tradition is an apt reminder of what the church should be - filled with disciples of Christ with a servant heart.

## ***Internal features***

The church has been reordered a couple of times in its history.

In 1978 the interior was converted from an east/west orientation to one of north/south and the nave was partitioned to form the hall. (The original hall which was further up the hill on Friars Street has since become the Assemblies of God church in Warwick.) The apse became the vestries and the south transept, the original cemetery chapel, became part of the nave. Then in 2001 the east/west orientation was reinstated and the vestries were moved to the south transept.

The roof remains untouched and is of hammer-beam construction. The shields on the ends of the beams bear the arms of English dioceses: from east to west, on the north wall - York, Lichfield, Worcester, Gloucester, Hereford, and Birmingham; on the south wall - Canterbury, Coventry, Bath and Wells, Winchester, Norwich and London; whilst those flanking the east window are of angels.

The four shields on either side of the apse represent the 4 evangelists:

- St Matthew - with the emblem of the 'Divine Man', because his gospel teaches us about the human nature of Christ.
- St Mark - the winged lion, because his gospel informs us of the royal dignity of Christ.
- St Luke - the winged ox because his gospel deals with the sacrificial aspects of Christ's life.
- St John - the rising eagle, because it is said his gaze pierced further into the mysteries of Heaven than any other man.

The doorway has a four-centred head and a window with Y-tracery.

The font is on the east side of the south transept.

## ***Stained Glass.***

The East Window features scenes from the life of Christ and is dated 1849

The windows on the north side in the church.

- \* the central window depicting the Risen Christ is in memory of Capt. Wilfrid Hensley who was killed in action at St. Quentin, France in 1918 aged 23. He was the only son of the Revd. H. G. Hensley, vicar of the parish 1887-1908.
- \* the two new windows either side of the central light were created by Jane Gray of Shrawardine, Shrewsbury and are dated 1992. (She assisted Lawrence Lee, the chief designer of the Coventry Cathedral Nave windows for two and a half years.)

Viewed as a pair and starting at the top:



On the left is a Cross surmounting a Staff: on the right the intertwined Alpha and Omega. Beneath these symbols are Palms painted freely on to the background, referring to the martyrdom of both St. Paul, to whom this church is dedicated, and St. Mark, whose church at Bilton is linked to this parish.

Both symbols - the Sword and Book of Paul and the winged Lion of Mark - are in their true heraldic colours and set in medallions.

The Bread and Wine of the Eucharist appear in each light in the form of Grapes, Wheat and Oats, and these provide a surround to two more medallions depicting Christian images. On the left are three superimposed portrayals of Christ: Anchor, Rose and Heart, and on the right the Chrismon - legend has it



that this appeared to the Emperor Constantine in a vision and he was converted to the Faith in the year AD 312.

In another pair of medallions something of the locality in and around Warwick is shown, bringing us into the contemporary life of the town. The Winning Post from the racecourse is here with six galloping

horses; whilst in the centre are various children's games. Opposite is Warwick Castle surrounded by vignettes of the Market Hall, St. John's House, Thomas Oken's House; one of the local Schools; the Clock face from Eastgate and the pub sign from next door - the Seven Stars (now longer a pub. A previous vicar was known to serve behind the bar as a relief barman to allow the landlords to take a holiday).

At the base of each light there is a Coat of Arms; that of Warwick Borough on the left, and on the right the Arms of the Diocese of Coventry.

The illuminated window of the Good Shepherd on the west wall of the transept is in memory of the Revd. W. F. McMichael who died in 1883. This window was moved from the north wall to make way for one of the new windows.

The windows on the south side of the hall (from east to west) depict

- \* The Presentation of Christ in the Temple
- \* Christ Teaching the Doctors in the Temple
- \* Christ blessing little children

The windows on the north side of the hall (from east to west) feature

- \* "Feed my lambs", Christ and St. Peter - in memory of William Shepherd who for thirty years was superintendent of St. Paul's Sunday School and died in 1888.
- \* An angel by a dying woman - in memory of Charlotte Sabin Lucan who served the church for 30 years and died in 1865)
- \* An angel and a child - in memory of Catherine Smith who died in 1863, aged five and a half. She was the third daughter of Edwin Trevelyn Smith, the vicar here from 1849-1866.

The windows on the west wall

- \* The rose window depicts Christ the King.
- \* The window on the left depicts St Paul and is in memory of Johannis Boudier.
- \* The window on the right depicts St Barnabas (presumably because he helped get St Paul started on his missionary activity and accompanied him on several of his journeys). This window is in memory of SC Hamerton.

There used to be a further 2 stained glass windows either side of the east window. For some reason these were removed in 1949.

- \* one was of a female before a desk - in memory of Frances Smith, wife of Edwin Trevelyn Smith. She died in 1859, aged 32. Her memorial stone is in the churchyard beside the part nearest the church door.
- \* the other was "affectionately dedicated to the pious memory of 6 children, 3 sons and 3 daughters of John and Eliza Dowler. Ad. 1860."

### *The carved pulpit*

This was made by a local craftsman, Thomas Kendall, who lived and worked in Chapel Street. More of his works are to be found around the locality.

### *Two external features of note*

The unusual square bell turret, with a pyramid-shaped roof. This is to be found in the corner by the conjunction of the east wall of the original Chapel and the south wall of the apse of the church.

The Coat of Arms along with the date "1824" above the South Door which is not of the diocese but of the town which built the original Cemetery Chapel.



## *The Living Building*

But St. Paul's is more than an interesting building with its architecture and past history. We pray that it is a living building in which the lives of those who come to worship are shaped and given purpose by the life-giving presence of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We pray that during your visit you too will have encountered his presence and will perhaps have been touched in an unexpected way. May God indeed watch over your coming in and going out from this day onwards. Please linger a while in our prayer corner and if you would like us to pray for you and / or to share with you in your prayers you are welcome to complete a prayer card and put it in the box provided. These will be prayed through at various times during the week.

