

The church building & contents through the years

1863 - 1869

When the church was first built in 1863 it was a simple, solitary rectangular building, with nave 67 feet by 24 feet, chancel 24 feet by 20 feet and small vestry room, costing £1,300. It was built in Gothic Revival style in yellow stock brick, stone dressing and slate roof. The architect was W Wigginton of County Chambers, Cornhill. The contractors were Messrs Bond of Hackney. There was a central light given by Mr GT Ewens, churchwarden, and two side lights presented to the church by Revd Fitz Wygram. There were no stained glass windows but there was a bell on the top of the west end of the roof.



St James's Church in 1863
with nave and chancel only



The east window
With plain glass



The bell tower
on the west end



The vicarage

The chalice shown on the right must have come to St James's in 1863 when the church was opened and used with the plain silver-plated paten, dated 1859. Maybe it was an acquisition of the young Fitz Wygram on the Grand Tour. The Victoria and Albert Museum inspected St James's chalices and patens in 1979. There are a number of silver marks on the ornate chalice - none very clear and none recognisably English. Underneath are scratched the initials HIK 1818. This chalice was confirmed baroque, made in Cologne in about 1760. The garnet stones had been set at a later date in silver-plated copper (perhaps by HIK in 1818?).

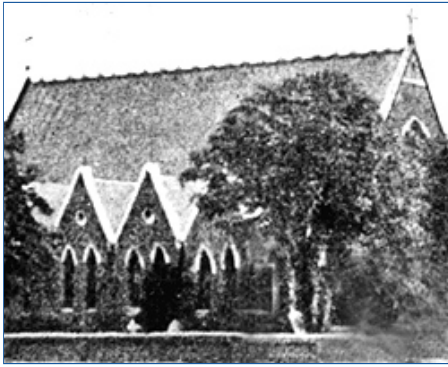


The chalice

The original vicarage was a large, elegant, gabled, typically Victorian one, which cost almost as much as the church itself. It was built in 1864 next to the church on the same site as the present vicarage, but farther from St James's Road down which it faced.

1870 - 1879

As the village, and consequently the congregation, grew it was soon obvious to Revd Fitz Wygram that the church needed enlargements, alterations and extensions which happened in subsequent years. These developments started in 1873 with a northern aisle, together with an outer porch at the west entrance. The Surrey Comet criticised the northern aisle, reporting that *"the work did not seem to be in keeping with the old. The addition consists of a northern aisle of six bays with transverse gables. To gain height and light these gables pierce the roof of the old nave. The new work has a more pretentious appearance"*. However the comments about the interior were much more positive: *"The advantage of the increased height obtained by the gabling tells admirably. It has afforded space for stone columns of a fair height with remarkably well proportioned arches also of stone work, permitting at the same time of aisle windows, large enough thoroughly to light the northern side of the church. The Chancel, always effective from its admirably proportioned arch and triple lancet windows, showed at its best from the removal of the organ into the eastern bay of the new aisle and a slight change in the position of the pulpit. It has gained vastly in effect from the introduction of stained glass of geometrical pattern to the eastern window, an offering from the Rev John Fitz Wygram"*.



St James's Church in 1873
with the north aisle added



The west porch
added in 1873



The west porch door
handle and hinge

A new vestry and organ chamber were added in 1874. [The organ](#), originally built by Bishop for St Peter's, Eaton Square in the 1830s, was bought for £150 by Revd Fitz Wygram in that year. A year later an organ-blower was appointed at a salary of £6 a year.

The chancel was lengthened by eight feet in 1877, with new [choir stalls](#) providing additional seats for the choir and the whole of the chancel repaved with special tiles.



The new vestry added in 1874



Choir stalls added in the extended
chancel

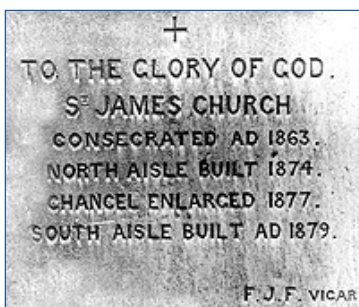
[See more photographs](#)



Tiles in the chancel

The south porch and south aisle were completed in 1879. Above the south door of the church are two reliefs, "*Suffer Little Children To Come Unto Me*" on the inside and "*Ask And It Shall Be Given*" on the outside. Ten columns were built altogether to support the nave roof, each being topped by a stone capital. Each of these capitals were carved with a different relief design of leaves with flowers or fruit. The roof timbers were like an upturned ship's hull, reminding us that St James was a fisherman.

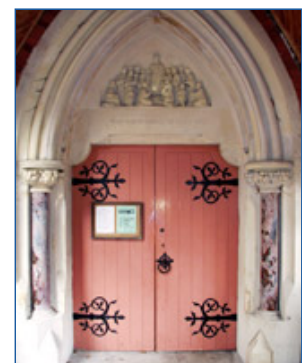
New stained glass windows were added to the north aisle in memory of William Singleton, St James's first organist. See them on the page [North aisle stained glass windows](#).



The foundation stone



St James's Church in 1879
with the south aisle added



The south door



"Suffer Little Children To Come Unto Me"



The south porch



"Ask And It Shall Be Given"

1880 - 1889



Revd Fitz Wygram's grave

After Revd Fitz Wygram's death in 1881 there were many memorials installed. These included the five pairs of stained glass windows in the south aisle depicting the parables. See them on the page [South aisle stained glass windows](#).

The beautiful west window depicting the Transfiguration was also a memorial to him. See this on the page [The nave stained glass windows](#). The plaque is inscribed *"To the Glory of God and in loving remembrance of Fitzroy John Fitzwygram, first vicar of this parish, 1863-1881. This window is erected by his parishioners and friends for 'A faithful man and feared God'."*

The original west porch, with a gable and stone cross replacing the old bell turret were also installed in his memory, and the single service bell was re-housed.

[The eagle lectern](#) made of brass, was presented by Lady Ward. It is supported by four bird-like feet and just above these is an inscription *"To the glory of God and in memory of Emily E. Ward 1882"*. St James's first two vicars married members of the

Ward family.

[St James's font](#), also gifted by Lady Ward, has a brass plaque on the east side of the base which is inscribed *"In memory of Sir Henry George Ward GCMG father of Alice Ward, Governor of Madras died August 2nd 1860"*. [The marble pulpit](#) was gifted by Revd Bligh a few years after he arrived.

Alterations and improvements to the church continued under Revd Bligh and, for the first time, Vestry records specify repairs to the roof.



The lectern



The pulpit



The font

The first mention of the organ in the magazine was in May 1885: *"The organ is a very good instrument, but somewhat old-fashioned in its mechanical structure, and very much out of repair."* At the cost of about £210 it was repaired and improved in that year by Messrs Bishops of Norwich, and a pedal bourdon stop added. The organ was ready for the Confirmation Service and *"the improvement effected by the repair and additions is very marked. The rich soft tone of the Bourdon pipes which form the western front of the organ is very pleasing"*.



The vicarage door carving

The vestry was improved by moving the vestry door from the chancel to the south aisle in 1886 giving some extra room in the chancel for further "choir seats". The plain, rough wall which had previously disfigured the south aisle was greatly improved by



St James's Church in the 1890s with tower and spire added

the introduction of the handsome carved doorway which in its former position in the chancel was almost out of sight *"and on the occasion of festivals the clergy and choir will not be compelled to face all weathers in their return from the heated Church to the vestry. The greatest gain, however, perhaps is inside the vestry, which by the alteration has been rendered capable of a far more convenient arrangement"*.

While this was happening, work was also carried out on repairing and improving the heating "apparatus". *"It is hoped that the warming powers of the apparatus will be found to be considerably improved."*

To celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887 it was decided to complete the church by building the tower and spire. On June 20th 1887, the anniversary of the Queen's accession, local clergy and gentry, led by the choir chanting Psalm 84, 'Oh how amiable are thy dwellings', processed to a platform on the site of the tower for a short service. The pink granite foundation stone, at the base of the southern wall, was laid by the vicar's only son, Edward. One each of every coin in the country, from a farthing to a guinea, was placed behind this stone. The well-proportioned tower, made of mellow stock brick with stone dressings, grew during the next few months. The gracefully tapering Portland stone spire was completed in the New Year and on January 3rd, 1888, in warm sunshine, the vicar and the intrepid Mrs Annie Bligh, together with the Church Wardens and other parishioners, climbed the scaffolding to the summit where Mrs Bligh placed the capstone in position. The £2500 required to pay for the tower and spire came in very slowly and caused great anxiety, so in June, 1891, a "Fancy Fair" was held to clear the remaining loan. More details can be found on the page the [Tower & spire through the years](#).

1890 - 1929



The clock

A clock with four dials and four bells for chiming were fixed in the tower in December 1893. The clock was manufactured in 1893 by J Smith & Sons of Derby, the builders of the great clock of St Paul's. It was dedicated at a special service on December 20th that year, and set in motion by the former vicar, Revd Bligh. The bells were cast by Warners, a London firm which has long gone out of existence.

Mrs Isdell Carpenter, whose father was the first warden of St James's and whose husband was vicar's warden for fourteen years, together with her sister, painted lilies and foliage in cream and gold on the pedal pipes in 1894. The real gold leaf used was specially supplied by the Admiralty. These were originally visible to the congregation but, due to later improvements to the organ, were later moved inside the organ chamber.

During Revd Job's incumbency the roof was repaired again around 1894 and the original gas lighting brackets and standards were re-gilded or lacquered in 1894. Originally the church, but initially not the vestry, was heated by a coke-fired boiler, later converted to oil-firing and then to gas. The whole heating system was repaired, the boiler was enclosed and new ventilators were installed. A small "supplementary heating apparatus" was installed in the chancel. The church underwent further improvements in 1899 including repairing the roof, renewing the ridge tiles and lead gutters, adding a covered chamber over the heating furnace and improving the ventilation of the church. Later *"The Churchwardens are anxious that the seats in the Church shall ultimately be all supplied with mats of the same pattern, and they wish me to ask if those who propose to put new mats in their pews will most kindly help to carry out this idea by selecting the red and black pattern which already largely prevails in the Church"*.



The painted organ pipes

Two further north aisle stained glass windows, depicting a Centurion kneeling and Jesus carrying the cross, were added in 1899. See these on the page [North Aisle Stained Glass Windows](#).



The sanctuary chair

A carved oak sanctuary chair was given by the Communicants' Association in 1897. The magazine of November 1899 reported: *"The Churchwardens are anxious that the seats in the Church shall ultimately be all supplied with mats of the same pattern, and they wish me to ask if those who propose to put new mats in their pews will most kindly help to carry out this idea by selecting the red and black pattern which already largely prevails in the Church."* A sample of this was available at the shop of Messrs Jones & Peers, in the High Street. During this period some gifts included twenty hassocks, a large new mat for the porch, a set of white embroidered alms bags, choir cassocks and embroidered bookmarks. A white altar frontal and a gold altar frontal, on a crimson background surrounded by valuable lace from the island of Corfu, were given for the *"Holy Table"*. A new curtain was placed on the west wall of the church which *"added greatly to the beauty of the Church and gave completeness to that part of it"*. Mrs Fitz Wygram donated hassocks (kneelers) for the free seats in 1910.

Two further stained glass windows were installed in 1899. They show Mater Dolorosa and Mater Purissima. See these on the page [North Aisle Stained Glass Windows](#). Many more windows were installed during the first half of 1900s. Find out all about these on the page [Stained Glass Windows through the years](#). Another two bells were added in 1902 and this completed a peal of six with the inscriptions of "CORONATION OF KING EDWARD VII JUNE 26TH 1902 FEAR GOD HONOUR THE KING" and 'JUNE 26TH 1902 HONOUR ALL MEN, LOVE THE BROTHERHOOD'. In 1903 windows replaced ventilators on the north side. *"These will add very much to the light and greatly improve the appearance of the church."* A beautiful mosaic of St Michael was erected in 1905. Three further [mosaics](#) were added between then and 1930.

The church was lit by gas until electric lighting was installed in 1904, with the magazine of September 1904 reporting: *"Experiments have been made and a system finally fixed upon. Not only will the light be much better than it is at present, but there will not be that exhaustion of the atmosphere, incidental to gas, which is so trying"*.



Early lighting

The organ was rebuilt in 1912 as a three manual instrument with *"an adequate pedal section and new pneumatic actions, with Hale's patent key stops"*. During a further rebuild in 1916, the painted wooden pipes were moved to the rear of the organ chamber and substituted by the cold looking silvered metal open diapason pipes which now fill the arch.

In 1919 the vicar wrote *"A very useful anthracite stove has been presented to the Church, placed in the Vestry, and has turned an ice-house into a very comfortable room. This gift is much appreciated, not least by the organist and choir and myself."*

The external fabric of the church underwent various repairs and redecoration at considerable expense in 1920. Money was given in 1922 to buy a hundred new hassocks for the free pews in the south aisle. *"It would add greatly to the appearance of the Church if those who have sittings would see that their hassocks were kept in good condition."*

A stone tablet was installed in memory of Revd Job also in 1920 and new acorn shaped lights, were given to the church in 1923. These remained till the early 1990s when they were replaced by red purpose-built chandeliers. Around the time of Revd Coad Pryor's incumbency, gifts included a set of beautifully worked offertory bags, a new book marker for the lectern and some other, embroidered, bookmarks. A grant of £20 was obtained from the Kingston Trust and spent on the renewal of some of the cassocks and surplices, and a hand made linen covering for the credence table, beautifully edged with lace.

1930 - 1959

A church flag, a handsome St George's flag, was presented to the church and replaced the old Union flag which was very much the worse for wear. The new flag was flown for the first time on the occasion of the 1935 fete. A children's corner was established inside and was dedicated in June, 1936. *"That it will serve a useful purpose has already been made certain. There are several children who spend some time during the week reading the books and thinking upon the things that really matter."*

Edward Bryant, a builder and surveyor, a member of St James's, was asked to be an advisor to the Parochial Church Council by the Revd Frederick Harvey in 1937. The PCC were keen to have his knowledge on the structure and fabric and repairs to the church. Edward came up with the idea of a model of the spire to help fund-raising to pay for necessary repairs. Edward drew the plans, signed and dated October 1937, together with the model. The model was to scale and was of the spire, south and west porches and part of the nave. In the early 1990s Edward refurbished the model.

The brass altar cross, two brass altar candlesticks and the silver pyx for holding communion wafers were given in memory of different people who served the church and community. The December 1950 magazine reported: *"If music is to be raised to its highest level of usefulness, there must be soul, technique, and a proper means of expression. That is where the Organ Builder becomes our ally, and to secure the best results we must be in possession of an Organ that is the expression of these qualities, so that the whole service may be lifted to a dignity and beauty that is otherwise impossible."* As nothing apart from tuning had been done to the organ since 1932, dirt had again accumulated, the leather work was perishing and the action motors were worn out. As a result many notes did not speak and the mechanism became unreliable, so the organ was renovated during 1951.



The silver pyx



The model of the church

The altar cross & candlestick

Different architects reported that the condition of the church was poor, mainly due to the poor materials used. A long report made in 1942 began with the words: *"Generally, the work in connection with this building is not of the first order and some of the materials are by no means first-class most of the defects are caused more by the materials employed than by faulty workmanship"*. The report made in 1953 by a different architect, under the scheme whereby the church was, and still is, inspected every five years, began in a similar way: *"The overall condition of the church is poor especially considering its comparatively recent date. The defects are practically all due to bad design and the use of poor materials at the time of building"*. In the report there were references to the poor quality of the lead gutters and flashings and apparently the roof over the south aisle has no such flashing at all, which contributed to the dampness. The slates of these roofs were of poor quality. Much of the external brickwork was not good, *"extensive attrition has taken place owing to the use of poor materials, aggravated at some points by water running down the face of the walls from the faulty down-pipes."* These pipes were of *"atrocious design"*, and on the north side of the church they were completely buried in the brickwork of the buttresses. This made it impossible for them ever to be cleaned out, and they simply corroded away with the water penetrating the walls and making them permanently damp. This caused interior damage as well. The heating system was criticised and blamed for increasing the rate of internal deterioration and decay. The damp walls caused fungal growth to attack the roof timbers on the south aisle, and the wooden benches in the north.

So during Revd Brunt's incumbency the church buildings and equipment needed a good deal of renovation and renewal. A well planned *"Great Renovation Drive"* in 1953 facilitated extensive roof repairs, new gutters and drain pipes, the replacement of rotten beam ends in the north and south aisles and various other urgent repairs. See the leaflet [Renovation Fund General Appeal](#). The stonework in the chancel and baptistry was cleaned and restored to its pristine whiteness by the hard labour and scrubbing of keen volunteers and neglected brasses had the dirt of years removed. The rotten and decayed pieces of beams were replaced by sound timber. *"At the same time as this is happening, we ourselves are planning and doing various things to improve the interior of our church and set it in order. We are tackling the question of old books and hassocks, repairing some, and buying new ones to replace those which are irreparable. New book-markers have been made by Mrs Futter; many prayer books have had their lives prolonged by Mr Harper; the Choirboys are to have new cassocks - and so little by little things are being done to make the church more seemly and well-ordered."*

In 1959 the vestry was cleared of dry rot by voluntary workers and later redecorated by the Young People's Fellowship. This transformed the cold, dingy, damp old vestry into a bright cosy room. The gift of a piano from an anonymous donor enabled it to be used as a song-room by the choir, and it became an excellent place for meetings and classes.

1960-1989

New hassocks were purchased in 1960 to replace the old, worn-out ones still in use. The Mother's Union banner was kept in the church.

Damage caused by wet and dry rot (shown right) was rectified in 1962. The church was entirely re-roofed two years later thus making it really waterproof for the first time in eighty years. Further defects were also remedied and this was followed by extensive interior decoration and the whole building was rewired in readiness for a new lighting system. The bare and gloomy brickwork was brightly painted, the dark stain on the beams in the roof of the nave and chancel was stripped, the varnished pine-boarded ceilings of the gables given a light covering, the stone-work was extensively cleaned by means of a new chemical process, and ugly beams in the ceilings of the north and south aisles were enclosed and painted. *"We now have a better and sounder building than at any time since its foundation."*

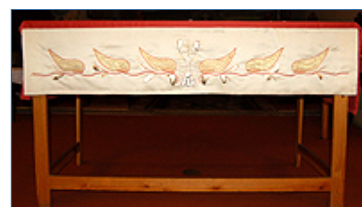


The credence table

In 1965 the bookstall of religious literature was opened and was called *"a progressive and live innovation"*, and reviews were added to the Spire magazine. A credence table was purchased in memory of two *"faithful parishioners"* in 1969. The south aisle was opened up by the removal of the pews in 1970 and the following year storage cupboards were built in the west porch. The organ was restored in 1972 by Bishop and Sons, the original builders, who incorporated a new electric action replacing the old pneumatic mechanism. The chalices and patens were examined at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1979.

A re-ordering of the church took place in 1983 *"to help make the conduct of the services more effective and dignified"*. The chancel floor was extended with an apron stage by about sixteen feet into the nave and covered with warm rust coloured carpeting complementing the tiles and blending well with the markings in the pulpit. In order to achieve this some of the pews in the nave and the north aisle were removed. The upper section of this new stage could be raised by about two feet for dramatic performances.

A second, portable, altar could then be placed on the stage in front of the chancel for parish services, leaving the High Altar in the Sanctuary. It was decided not to have a central section in the new communion rail to avoid a symbolic feeling that the altar was 'fenced off' from the worshipping congregation. A special gift from the members of the Mothers' Union, a new linen altar cloth hand embroidered in the corners and totally covering the sanctuary altar, was given in 1983.



The original portable altar

At the same time a system of microphones and speakers was installed to help make all readers' or talkers' voices heard in all parts of the church, with a loop system for those with hearing difficulties. During the re-ordering of the church some of the heating pipework had to be reorganised to avoid tripping over exposed pipes. At the same time the boiler was converted to gas, which it was hoped would make the operation of the system both more flexible and cheaper to run.

A new altar frontal was made by Margaret Lawrence in 1985 based on 'St James the Fisherman' and incorporating the shell emblem of St James.

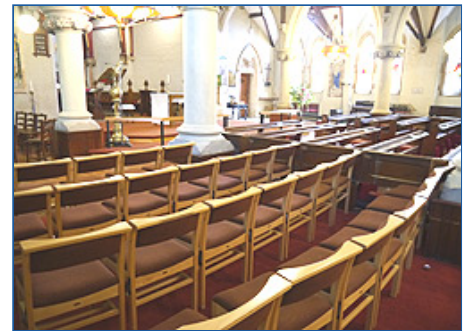
There was another outbreak of dry rot in 1987 causing extensive damage to the floors at the east end. It is probable that after each attack fungi and spores lay dormant in the building. This time one of the cast iron Victorian rainwater heads had become blocked repeatedly and consequently rusted through, soaking the vestry wall. In the end, the rot, which came from an old timber member buried in the brickwork, affected only the lower ends of a few of the vestry roof members, which were fairly easily replaced. As the vestry had to be cleared for this work, it made sense to take advantage of the opportunity to carry out a long overdue redecoration.



Extended chancel floor
with apron stage in 1983



The new altar frontal



North aisle
carpet and chairs in 1992

1990 - 1999



The interior of the church was improved during 1991 with stone cleaning, followed by a complete re-decoration of the walls and ceiling. As the banded brickwork had been painted over many years earlier, some colour needed to be brought back into this rich Victorian interior. This was provided by dark brown staining for the formerly poorly limed oak of the main roof trusses, and the red staining of the chancel trusses with the addition of gold stopped chamfers.

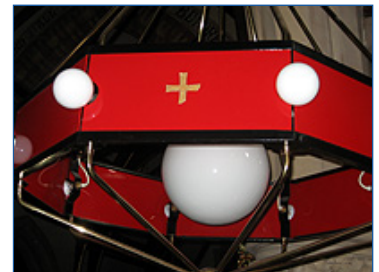
The illuminated inscription over the chancel arch added considerable richness to this area, but as it had decayed to a marked extent, it was carefully conserved.

Following this, in the north aisle upholstered chairs and carpet replaced the pews and bare boards to improve its use for families and special occasion worship.

Further seating could be provided by stackable chairs in the south aisle, allowing for a more flexible seating pattern, with the facility for providing maximum seating accommodation when the occasion demanded.

The twelve pendants in the nave, the ceiling lights and the ceiling tracks in the chancel were installed by a firm of professional electricians. The then controversial red purpose-built chandeliers were a product of close co-operation between the architect, metalworker, electrician and glazier. The red glass, in the original plans, was deemed too expensive and was replaced with perspex.

The foundation stone for the new church hall was consecrated by the Bishop of London, David Hope, during the St James's Festival on the 4th July, 1993. The 'topping-out' ceremony took place in December of the same year and the hall was officially opened on the 4th September 1994.



A red chandelier



Building the hall

Included in the new building was a "very attractive porch joining the church and the hall, somewhat in the style of a Lych-gate, like a bridge between the spiritual and the secular, between the Church and the World". At this time twin boilers were installed to serve both the hall and church. However the original cast-iron pipework remained, largely unaltered, until 2015. The wiring and lighting in the nave and chancel were again modernised during the hall construction.

Restoration work on the church had to be done in 1995: crumbling stonework around the west window was replaced or repaired, coping stones were renewed, the cross, blown down in a gale, was repaired and replaced, and much of the brickwork was repointed. New grilles were added to protect the stained glass windows. The west porch was rejuvenated by repairs and cleaning after an arson attack. The south porch was also cleaned and restored. The February 1997 Spire reported: *"The organ is need of considerable work, both in repairing dilapidations and in adapting its nature if it is to continue to prove useful for our needs both in worship and recital."* So the organ was again overhauled, serviced and modernised by John Males of Eastbourne. Three completely new stops were added: a bass oboe, a clarinet and a cornepean (trumpet). Together these constituted one hundred and sixty two new pipes of varying sizes. Some of the new pipes were salvaged from a neighbouring church while others were paid for by sponsors who were dubbed 'organ donors'. This work made it the biggest organ in the Borough of Richmond at the time.

A Book of Remembrance, with the names of parishioners who had died, was placed in church at the east end of the south aisle, to the left of the vestry door. Then a prayer corner was established in 1998, also at the east end of the north aisle but to the right of the vestry door, with some bequest money being used to purchase an icon and candlestick. The creation of a series of new [kneelers](#) was a millennium project for the church which involved a group of about thirty people using their talents and artistic energy to give something lasting to St James's.

A small wooden portable font was purchased in memory of Vivienne Prentice. This is still used to enable baptisms to take place in the nave at the front of the church during parish communion. This font has a wooden base which supports a copper bowl. The base is inscribed *"Let the children come to me. In memory of Vivienne Prentice, 1898 - 1995."* The speech reinforcement system was overhauled and brought up to date by a team of acoustic engineers in 1999. There were new microphones, an additional speaker, and facilities for audio recording and use of tapes and CDs.



The Book of Remembrance
in 1998



St. James's Church in 1994
with the south porch added



The prayer corner icon
& candlestick in 1998

2000 - 2009

The building of the west porch extension in 2004-6 with its glass doors gave a view of the whole length of the nave and the chancel. The floodlighting of the altar lit up the interior of the church and so enhanced the 'Open Door' aspect of the project. The ongoing life within the church could then be seen from the road and showed that it was an open and active organisation. The west porch also provided a place for the administrative load of the parish to be securely and effectively undertaken, and allowed the church to be staffed and open much more of the time. Read the page [The West Porch through the years](#).



St James's Church in 2006
with the west porch added

Over the years the sun had caused the leads of the stained glass windows in the south aisle to deteriorate badly and the windows were bowed and leaking. The surrounding masonry was also suffering from rainwater leakage. So in 2005 Chapel Studios, the recommended specialists, started a repair programme. Read about this and see the photos on the article [Stained Glass Window Refurbishment](#).



The sanctuary niche

A further major modification of the church wiring was carried out during the building of the west porch extension. This included floodlighting the altar so that the interior of the church was lit to enhance the 'Open Door' aspect of the project. Some of the brickwork facing the organ was crumbling so in 2006 work was done to prevent the further entry of dust particles from the original mortar into the operating mechanism. This problem had plagued the instrument over many decades. While attending to this problem a section of heating pipe was discovered to be lagged with cracking asbestos and that needed to be dealt rapidly by a specialist asbestos removal firm.

The rising cost of metal led to a big rise in the theft of lead from church roofs and in 2007 the lead from the west porch was stolen. Replacing it cost nearly £2000 and although insured, the church had to pay a £200 excess. To remain fully insured, a new protection technique was then used to mark the exposed roofing metal with a proprietary paint, invisible in normal light but detectable to scrap dealers. This was done and a new notice told visitors that the church metal was 'SmartWater protected', which would make it less vulnerable.

In 2008, a plain chalice was purchased to match the existing one, together with a ciborium of matching design which replaced the use of the paten to hold the communion wafers. An aumbry, a locked safe to hold the consecrated (made sacred) bread and wine not used during the normal communion, was fixed in the wall in the sanctuary in 2009. A wax sanctuary lamp was placed in the niche next to the aumbry as a sign that this sacrament was stored there. The lamp was kept burning, reminding us that Christ was always present.



The vestments press



The portable altar



The clavichord

A vestments press for the vestry, to keep the clergy's vestments in good condition, was bought in 2009 in memory of Margery Orton, and a new oak portable altar was purchased in memory of Margaret Brammel. Both purchases were made possible by bequests to the church. A new clavichord was gifted to the church.

2010 - 2016 November



The information table

An information table was put at the back of the church near the new west entrance early in 2010. The idea was to keep useful information here for people to browse or take away. The information included Spire magazines, information leaflets, church description cards, welcome cards, etc.

The Prayer Corner was moved to the east end of the north aisle in 2010 and incorporated into a larger prayer area with a small altar with candles which could be lit as a sign of the offering of prayers. There was a prayer desk with a book where people's names or issues for prayer could be written and chairs were grouped around the prayer desk and altar.

After the final settlement on the West Porch it was agreed by the PCC that a new Inspecting Architect should be appointed and Daniel Goldberg agreed to take up the post. The new small room in the west porch, built as an interview room or a counselling room, proved to be too cold and damp and unuseable as such. It was therefore turned into a very useful storage room with fitted shelves.

The church's sound system underwent a major upgrade during 2011, following a number of breakdowns over the previous year. The thirty year old speakers were replaced by new ones and a new amplifier to ensure that services could be heard throughout the church, including the choir stalls. There were also new radio microphones as well as a radio stick microphone that were soon put to good use around the church.



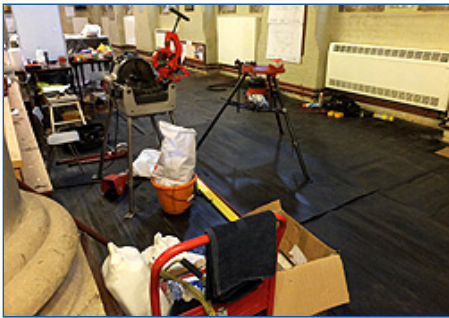
The prayer corner

A baby grand piano was gifted to the church around 2011. A new paschal candlestick was bought in memory of Roma Bridges in 2012 and a votive candlestand was bought in memory of the Revd Betty Stewart who died in May 2013.

After several years of planning, the church central heating system was replaced in the summer of 2014. New, energy-efficient boilers for both the church and hall and new pipework and radiators were installed in the church. Paid for by the sale of 82 Pigeon Lane, Hampton, the project was professionally overseen by Martin Dow of EngDesign and undertaken by ThermoServ of Croydon. With space limited, two Sunday services took place at 9 am and 11 am. Weekday services were held in the upper room.



Preparing for the services
in the Fitz Wygram Hall



Working on the new heating system
in the church



Working on the new heating system
in the church

Major work to replace a blocked drain by the north side of the church was completed early in 2016. The old drainpipe and soakaway (a pit into which the water is piped so that it drains slowly into the surrounding soil) was damaged by tree roots, causing water to soak into the brickwork.

A big screen and a new sound system was installed at St James's during May 2016. The work also included an upgrade of the sound system with replacement speakers, state-of-the-art stereo microphones, headsets for clergy and a new induction loop for anyone with a hearing aid. These provided a huge opportunity to enhance services and events. Over the course of a few months a small team of operators got to know its capabilities. The screen was used to show films, the words of hymns or for a sermon. A camera was also installed, making it possible to webcast services or concerts. The equipment was operated from a new console desk at the back of church where there was a digital mixing desk and a laptop to power the audio visuals. The work was made possible by the legacy of the Revd Betty Stewart.



The above information covers the period from when any records could be found until November 2016. This was when Revd Derek Winterburn became St James's tenth vicar and from this time onwards any new information can be found on the main site.