

History of Holy Trinity Church, Horwich

A chapel is known to have stood on the site in the sixteenth century, the first known curate being recorded as E. Tempest in 1521. It is also known that a chapel-of-ease existed in 1552 as an inventory records ornaments for the mass and for three bells which had not been hung.



The first Horwich Chapel—built in the 1600s, painted in 1780

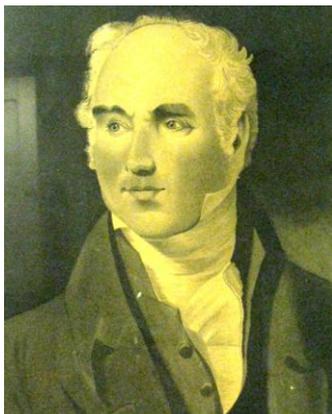


This chapel was replaced by a second building in 1782, but due to the coming of the bleach works at the Wallsuches the population rose from 305 in 1774 to 3562 in 1831, and so this second building was too small.

1831

Our church is one of many similar churches built throughout the early part of the 19th century; known as “Waterloo” churches.

A fund had been set up in 1818 by His Majesty's



Commissioners to build churches in populous

districts in thanks for Wellington's victory at Waterloo. This fund, along with generous contributions from the Ridgway family, particularly Joseph, made construction possible.



The first stone was laid on May 21st 1830 by Joseph Ridgway, and the church consecrated by the Lord Bishop of Chester, John Bird Sumner, on November 3rd 1831.

Holy Trinity remained a chapel-of-ease within the Parish of Deane until 1853 when it became a separate parish.

1903

Chancel & Vestry

The church remained virtually unchanged from 1831 until 1903 when the current chancel and vestry were added in memory of Rev. H. S. Pigot, vicar of Horwich for 48 years.

Until then there had been two double-decker pulpits at the very front of the nave, one at both side and they were level with the gallery.

With the new chancel these were removed leaving a single pulpit and choir stalls were installed. The pulpit at that time stood on the raised chancel.

1950

The next major changes came in 1950 and these were designed by one of the best known firms of ecclesiastical architects, Messrs. Nicholson & Rushton of Lincoln's Inn.

The Sanctuary

The sanctuary was brought forward with a new communion rail; the chancel steps were also moved forward along with the choir stalls, the pulpit moved to the position in which it was until 2009, and the wooden screens behind the choir stalls and at the front of the chancel were added.

Side Chapel & Windows

The box pews in the north east and south east corners were removed and the side chapel was created. The four lovely stained glass panels were added to the east window and a small window based upon John the Baptist added high in the north side of the chancel.

The Baptistry

At the rear of the nave the baptistry was repositioned and the rear doors replaced.

Early 1960's

In the early 1960's all the box pews were removed and the current light oak pews were paid for by members of the congregation.

The White Lady

The "White Lady" is a sculpture in white marble by Westmacott, commissioned as a memorial to Joseph Ridgway in 1842. At that time it was contained within a very large square box pew, but in the 1950 restoration she was able to be seen much more clearly.

The Bells and Bell Tower

In 1913 two more bells were added to the original 6 which had rung since 1831 to make the only full peal of bells in Horwich. In 2004 it was found that major restoration work, costing over £40000, was needed on both the bells and the bell tower. The money was raised through public donations and the work completed in 2005.

2009



Re-ordering for the 21st Century

In 2009 plans finally came to fruition for a re-ordering of the church which would take it into the 21st century as a building for the people of Horwich.

A new ramp was created to the main entrance; a narthex was formed at the back of church to include "Lucy's Room" (named after the late Lucy Pendlebury) for the use of the youngest members of church, and a servery.

In the chancel area the front screen and pulpit have been removed, and most of the choir stalls replaced with moveable seating; new moveable preaching desks are installed and the font has been relocated at the front of the church.

A new office / library have been created, and a new sound system and projection screen installed.

At the time of writing plans have been drawn up for the re-ordering to be completed by improving seating in the balcony.

