



**LIVERPOOL'S NOBLEST VICTORIAN CHURCH:  
HISTORY, ARCHITECTURE AND CONSERVATION**

*The Story of St. Agnes & St. Pancras, Toxteth Park*

by Ian Simpson





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by Ian Simpson  
Edited by Tracy Ryan

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Dedicated to the memory of our Founder H. Douglas Horsfall,  
of his parents Robert and Emily Horsfall, and of the Rev. Charles Cunningham Elcum.

*All photographs and illustrations by the author unless stated.*



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*A cutting from the Liverpool Daily Post of 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1924 – incidentally the date on which Britain's first ever Labour government took office.*

## LIVERPOOL'S NOBLEST VICTORIAN CHURCH

The description which gives this book its title comes from the pen of the distinguished architectural writer and critic Sir Nikolaus Pevsner who wrote of St. Agnes' Church (in 1969), "It is the noblest Victorian church in Liverpool, erect and vigorous, and not in the least humbled by being of red brick"<sup>(1)</sup>. Simon Jenkins included it in his Top 100<sup>(2)</sup>, the only church in the historic County of Lancashire to be so honoured. The church's Founder himself declared his intention to have been to build "the church which will most readily bring a man to his knees".

If you already know the Church of St. Agnes & St. Pancras, as it has been since 1985, then none of these accolades will surprise you; if you do not, then I have tried my best to convey something of its wonders to you within the limitations of a few dozen sheets of A5 paper, and I hope this will encourage you to come and visit soon. Even for regular visitors there is always something new to be seen, some hitherto unnoticed detail to be appreciated. I've thrown a few things I've spotted over the years into this book in the hope that everyone will learn something new.

My first encounter with "St. Aggie's" came in 1987 when, as a 16-year-old, I joined the choir, in those days under the direction of Alan Williams. I spent a couple of happy years, roughly coincident with my time in the Sixth Form at the Liverpool Blue Coat School, as a member of the Bass section alongside Peter Kennerley, Eddie Bentley and John Lansley, all of whom were far better singers than I. The choir was often given opportunities to sing in cathedrals (Lincoln and St. Asaph spring to mind) and it was a good social experience as well as a sound grounding in the Anglican church's musical tradition. My move to Bradford in 1989 brought my time here to an end, or so I thought, but the church always held a special place in my affections.

Fast forward 25 years to 2014 when the then Archdeacon of Liverpool, Ven. Ricky Panter, asked me to go along to St. Agnes' in my role as the Diocese's Heritage Officer to discuss with Fr. Christopher Cook the possibility of raising a fairly substantial sum of money to pay for some urgent repairs; I was glad to, of course. One thing led to another and I found myself warmly welcomed into the congregation. Before I knew it, I found myself on the PCC as Restoration Project Manager, even abseiling from Liverpool Cathedral's Corona Gallery in 2016 to raise some sponsorship towards the project!

It is, of course, a great privilege to be entrusted with such a role and (for all it has given me several sleepless nights) it has been great fun and I have learnt much. The story of the most recent phase of repair work, completed with less than three hours to spare before Fr. Derek's Licensing Service in September 2017, is told in the third section of the book; before that we shall look at the church's fascinating history and at some of its treasures. There is a lot more than can be told within these pages and maybe at some point time and resources will allow a more in-depth study of the church to be produced.

Ian Simpson

Liverpool, September 2018

A.M.D.G.

## EXPLANATION OF TERMS

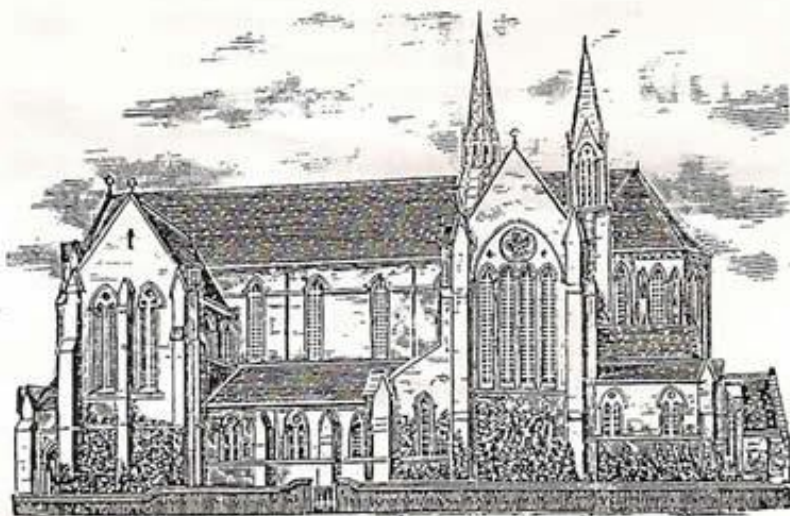
For the benefit of readers who are unfamiliar with some of the terms used, the following explanations might be useful.

**Anglo-Catholicism** (aka **Tractarianism**). A movement within the Church of England which emphasises its Catholic heritage, particularly with respect to the importance of the sacraments and a calling to personal holiness. It highlights the historical continuity of the Anglican Church with Catholic Christianity.

**Evangelicalism**. A movement within the Church of England (and other Christian denominations) which emphasises the importance of salvation by faith and the conversion experience. To Evangelical Christians, the Bible is of supreme importance as the inspired word of God and ritual in worship is of little importance.

**Faculty**. A legal document, obtained from the Chancellor of the Diocese, permitting the change of use of part of a church building or a physical alteration to a church building.

**Parochial Church Council (PCC)**. The basic unit of government within the church of England, equivalent to the Board of Trustees of a charity. The PCC has the legal responsibility for ensuring that the church building and finances are properly managed.



# HISTORY

## CONTEXT

No church can be understood in isolation from its historical context. Liverpool in the 1880s had a much larger population than it does now and these 800,000 souls were concentrated into a rather smaller geographical area than that covered by the city today. It was one of the most important cities of the British Empire and a major hub of international trade which made many people seriously wealthy. As has always been the way, those with the means to do so sought cleaner, greener and quieter places to live and in the late Victorian era one of the most fashionable areas of Liverpool was Sefton Park.



Sefton Park had been laid out from 1870 on some 95 hectares (235 acres) of Toxteth Park which had, from the time of King John until 1591, been a Royal hunting park. The name “Sefton Park” derives from the Earls of Sefton into whose hands the land had passed subsequently. This area, far from being an inner-city area characterised by transient populations and high levels of deprivation, was an affluent and much sought-after location.

The second feature of 1880s Liverpool life which needs to be understood is the extreme sectarianism which pervaded all levels of religious activity. The two basic factions within the Church of England, the Evangelicals and the Anglo-Catholics, were locked in what they saw as an existential battle for the true religion of England.

Of course this factionalism was not confined to Liverpool but its effects were particularly profound in the city and had been since the 1840s, when the notorious Rev. Dr. Hugh M’Neile missed no opportunity to inflame anti-Catholic sentiment with his rhetoric. The Diocese of Liverpool was formed in 1880 and from the start the Evangelicals, backed by a strong Orange Order, put pressure on the new Bishop, J.C. Ryle (a prominent Evangelical) not to compromise with the “Popery” (their word) of Anglo-Catholicism.

When the devout Anglo-Catholic philanthropist Robert Horsfall died in 1881, his son H. Douglas Horsfall (*above, photo from church website; original photographer unknown*), then aged just 26, set about the task of building a church in his memory; this was to be “the church which will most readily bring a man to his knees”.

The prominent architect John Loughborough Pearson was commissioned to design the church. The corner site at the junction of Ullet Road and Buckingham Avenue was acquired and the construction of St. Agnes' Church began in 1883.

## THE HORSFALL FAMILY TREE

Before continuing with the story, it is worthwhile familiarising ourselves with the principal members of the Horsfall family and their relationship to each other. The family is an old one, known to go back at least as far as the 1400s in the Huddersfield area; their coat of arms, dating from the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, may be seen in the church at Kirkburton near Huddersfield.

The family's connection to Liverpool really begins with Charles Horsfall (1776-1846) who left Yorkshire aged 16 to seek adventure and fortune in the Caribbean. He seems to have found the latter at least, and in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century he returned to England a wealthy sugar merchant. Where else would such a man settle but in Liverpool, which by now had eclipsed Bristol as the country's main trading port? He made his home in Everton, then a sought-after hillside retreat from the squalor and grime of the city.

In 1812 Charles Horsfall became a subscriber to the building fund for a new church in Everton; this materialised as St. George's, the first of four "cast iron churches" to be built in Liverpool by the partnership of architect Thomas Rickman and engineer John Cragg. Charles Horsfall played an illustrious role in the civic life of the city – he was Mayor in 1832/3 – and he had thirteen children.

When Charles Horsfall died in 1846, his children, led by Robert Horsfall, commissioned the Manchester architect George Shellard to build a church in his memory. This was, according to James Picton,<sup>(3)</sup> a "very excellent reproduction of a parish church of the fifteenth century... in white stone", and it began the family tradition of engaging nationally-known architects to design their churches.

Robert Horsfall, a stockbroker, went on to found two further churches: St. James-the-Less, Kirkdale, and St. Margaret of Antioch, Toxteth. He was a committed Anglo-Catholic – unlike his Evangelical younger brother George who founded Christ Church, Toxteth Park.

With his wife Emily, who features strongly in the early history of St. Agnes', Robert had three sons: Charles Henry (born in 1855), Howard Douglas (1856) and Robert Ernest (1858) of whom the younger two preferred to be known by their middle names.

Douglas Horsfall, Founder of St. Agnes' Church, married Mabel Parks-Smith in 1887 and they had four children together of whom one, Robert Elcum Horsfall, fell in the First World War, a Captain in The King's (Liverpool) Regiment. Ewart Douglas Horsfall, their youngest son, went on to become an Olympic rower. He died in 1970.

## CONSECRATION & CONTROVERSY

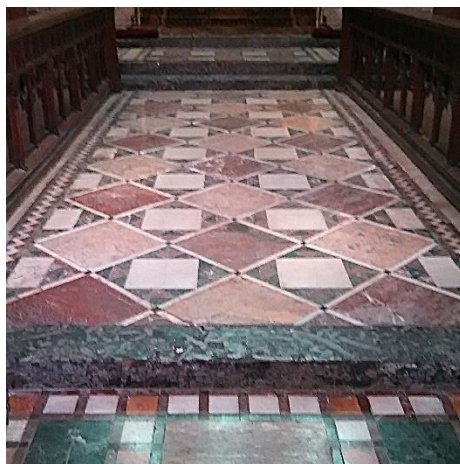
The Consecration of the Church of St. Agnes, Virgin & Martyr, took place on St. Agnes' Day, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 1885. Neither the interior of the church nor the organ was complete and the first baptism took place on the day of consecration in a temporary font, the infant being the daughter of the Sacristan Mr. E.A. Tugman. She was given the name Agnes and the water in which she was baptised had been brought to Liverpool from the River Jordan by the Vicar, Rev. Charles Cunningham Elcum, specially for the occasion.

Rev. Elcum had been an assistant master at King's College School in London prior to accepting Mr. Horsfall's invitation to the Incumbency of St. Agnes' and was to serve as vicar for 42 years until his retirement in 1927.

The church was consecrated by Bishop Ryle who had been presented shortly beforehand with a petition protesting against the consecration. There had also been a campaign against the consecration in the newspapers and certain agitators had suggested that were the Bishop to proceed then trouble would ensue. Thankfully no disruption materialised on the day.

In February 1885, Bishop Ryle informed Rev. Elcum that his induction would be cancelled unless he immediately stopped certain liturgical practices which were held to be illegal under the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874. These were the use of Eucharistic Lights, the use of wafer-bread, the mixing of wine and water within the chalice and the singing of the *Agnus Dei* ("Lamb of God"). Rev. Elcum gave an undertaking to obey the Bishop's requirement and he was officially inducted into the position of Vicar on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1885.

By the end of October, 1885, the pulpit and the chancel floor were completed. The craftsmanship and the materials used reflected the care and attention to detail which had been devoted by the church's founder to making God's house a place of beauty.



1885 closed with the ordination to the Diaconate of Rev. Maurice F. Bell who served under Rev. Elcum as the first Curate of St. Agnes' Church.

Whilst the consecration of St. Agnes' had passed without the threatened disruption, it was not without its consequences elsewhere. Dr. Hakes, a worshipper at St. Bride's and a prominent member of an Evangelical organisation known as the Church Association, was furious at Bishop Ryle's dismissal of the petition against St. Agnes' and looked to strike a blow against Anglo-Catholicism; this he did by launching legal proceedings under the Public Worship Regulation Act against Fr. James Bell Cox, Vicar of St. Margaret's<sup>(4)</sup>.

Fr. Bell Cox was found guilty of using Ritualist practices and suspended from ministry for six months. Upon his return from suspension he immediately resumed the proscribed activities and this ultimately resulted in his imprisonment in 1887 for "contumacy" (nowadays referred to as "contempt of court"). He served seventeen days in Walton Gaol before being freed on a technicality.

Meanwhile in 1886, the necessary legal formalities were completed to allow marriages to take place at St. Agnes', the first being on March 4<sup>th</sup> of that year.

The Scriptures tell us that "there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes, ch. 1 v.9) and so it will not surprise modern-day members of St. Agnes' congregation that the church's heating system was judged to be inadequate almost from day one. As early as 1887 the system was changed from the high-pressure one originally installed to the Wenham & Waters low-pressure system. Very little information exists today regarding this system but it seems it employed a valve, invented by the company's co-founder W.P. Wenham, to prevent the boiler from exploding.

Another important development of 1887 was the construction of the Vicarage and the Parish Room. These were designed by the eminent architect Norman Shaw (today they are both Listed buildings in their own right) and paid for by Emily Horsfall, the Founder's mother. Emily Horsfall was a regular and generous benefactor of St. Agnes', presenting the church with three exquisitely-embroidered altar frontals between 1885 and 1895.

In 1891 the Rev. J.G. Love became curate. He started a parish magazine which was to run for several decades and was instrumental in founding the Sunday School which, in its heyday, had over 200 members.

1893 was a year of tragedy for our founder as it saw the death of his beloved elder brother Charles E. Horsfall at the age of just 37 years. The frieze in the Chancel Apse based upon Van Eyck's *The Adoration of The Lamb* was commissioned in his memory and executed over a period of two years by Nathaniel Hitch who had worked with John Loughborough Pearson at Truro Cathedral.

The wooden musicians' loft (known irreverently as the "Minstrels' Gallery") was added to the Lady Chapel in 1893 to Pearson's design; in the same year a Faculty was secured to allow the use of the Lady Chapel for services; to this day it is used for midweek Masses.

In 1897 the Bishop's ban on the use of Ritualist practice in the liturgy was overturned and Fr. Elcum was once again free to lead worship as his conscience directed.

## ST. PANCRAS' CHURCH, LIDDERDALE ROAD

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the northern part of the parish was developed into the dense network of terraced streets known today as 'The Dales' and in 1894 the Presbyterian Church of St. Columba was built for the benefit of the people of the area. Douglas Horsfall was unhappy about the lack of an Anglican church serving the new development and so he paid for the construction of a daughter church to St. Agnes' on Lidderdale Road. This was dedicated to St. Pancras, the Roman boy martyred under Diocletian aged just fourteen, and its consecration took place on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1897. Architecturally, the new church was not in the same class as St. Agnes' but it was gifted with a particularly handsome oak pulpit. This was the work of Miss Florence Moss and Miss Emily Moss and the carving took four years to complete.

St. Pancras' Church had a short and relatively uneventful life although it did get a mention in Katy Flynn's family saga *Poor Little Rich Girl*<sup>(5)</sup>, set in 1934. It closed in 1937 and the building was subsequently used as the school hall for the Lidderdale Road Infants' School which the author of this book attended, very happily, from 1976 to 1978. The school was closed and demolished in 2003 and the site is now occupied by apartments.

## INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

St. Agnes' Church was, as was expected of every branch of the Established Church, very much involved in the national mourning which took place upon the death of Queen Victoria in 1901 and in the celebrations surrounding the coronation of her successor, King Edward VII, the following year.

1902 was not a happy year for St. Agnes', however, as our Founder's mother Emily Horsfall passed away in June. Mr. Horsfall himself wrote, "During the last two years of her life she was entirely confined to her room and suffered much pain, but so long as she was able she took the keenest and most generous interest in the church she had done so much to help and beautify"<sup>(6)</sup>. A fine stained glass window entitled *Mothers In Israel* was installed in her memory and in 1904 R. Ernest Horsfall (Emily's youngest son) donated the Lady Chapel reredos, by G.F. Bodley (1827-1907), also in her memory.

The Lady Chapel reredos was not the first work of the great Bodley to be installed at St. Agnes'; a year previously the wrought iron screen separating the Lady Chapel from the South Aisle had been added to his design.

1907 brought an end to the practice of segregating the sexes, allowing families to worship together for the first time; for the 22 years previously, the women had occupied seats on the left side of the church and the men seats on the right.

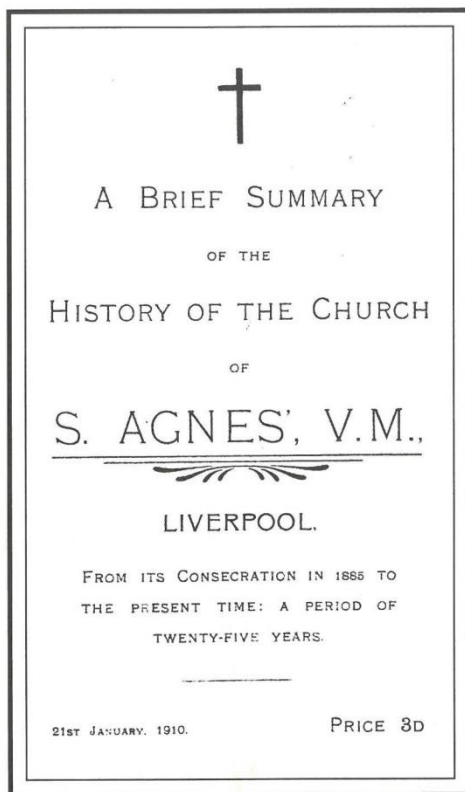
The organ, one of Emily Horsfall's contributions to the church in 1885, was completely rebuilt by Liverpool firm Rushworth & Dreaper in 1908 at a cost to Douglas Horsfall of £526. The manual blowers were replaced with electric ones and the heavy tracker action (a system of wooden rods linking the keyboard mechanically to the pipes) was done away with in favour of a lighter pneumatic system. The original pipes were retained as of course was the splendid wooden organ case. Interestingly John Loughborough Pearson only ever designed three organ cases: that in St. Agnes' and two at Westminster Abbey. Upon completion, the "new" organ was unveiled with a public recital by the legendary Alfred Hollins (1865-1942), "The Blind Organist of Edinburgh" as he was happy to be known.

The church celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 1910, and to mark the occasion Mr. Horsfall paid for a number of carved stone 'grotesques' to replace the plain stone corbels in the transepts. Writing in the Parish Magazine<sup>(7)</sup>, he explained that "these ornaments are quite characteristic of that period of architectural art of which the late Mr. Pearson, R.A., has given us so fine an example in St. Agnes' Church. It is interesting to know that although he professed himself entirely unequal to the designing thereof, he entirely approved of this quaint expression of Mediaeval art, specimens of which have survived in many of our Cathedrals".

Unusually, our Founder still played an active part in the life of the church he had endowed: he served as People's Warden and led many of the activities for younger people within the Parish. For the Silver Jubilee he also wrote a short brochure<sup>(8)</sup> (*right*) summarising the events of the church's first 25 years.

In fact Mr. Horsfall would go on to serve in the role of People's Warden until 1932, 47 years after the church's consecration.

In 1904 Douglas Horsfall had founded the theological college of St. Chad in North Yorkshire. This college was specifically for training young men for ordination who would otherwise be prevented from following their calling to the ministry by a lack of funds to pay for their training.



St. Chad's College soon expanded and in 1907 became a College of the University of Durham, whereupon our Founder was awarded an honorary Master of Arts Degree by that university in recognition of his work. To this day, the College motto *Non vestra, sed vos* ("Not what is yours, but what you are") reminds us that it was founded to help those of restricted means fulfil their potential. The College still plays a part in the life of St. Agnes' Church as, since 1926, it has held the Patronage of the church which gives it a say in the appointment of the Vicar.

The handing over of the Patronage by Douglas Horsfall was significant as Fr. Elcum retired in August 1927 having been Vicar for 42 years and seven months.

In October 1927 the Rev. Thomas Holme was appointed Vicar of St. Agnes'. The late Mary Brown remembered Mr. Holme ("it was always 'Mister Holme', we never called him 'Father'") as a kind man, married with a son and a daughter.

From its opening in 1885 until 1929, St. Agnes' Church had been served by just one Organist and Choirmaster, Mr. I.H. Stammers, who had built up a tradition of musical excellence within the church. His successor was Dr. C.E. Jarvis, who maintained the tradition and whose regular organ recitals became a feature of church life for some time.

## THE GOLDEN JUBILEE

It is, we believe, unique in the history of the Church of England for the Founder of a church to live to see the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its consecration. In 1935 Douglas Horsfall was present at the Golden Jubilee celebrations of St. Agnes' Church. He was 78.

Grateful to God for having spared him to see such an occasion, our Founder made what turned out to be his final gift to the church: the magnificent West Window, designed by the Liverpool stained glass artist A.G. Moore.

As well as being an act of thanksgiving, the West Window is a memorial to Robert Horsfall (who is depicted as St. Chad, holding a model of Lichfield Cathedral) and to Fr. Elcum (depicted as St. Luke).

In 1936, almost exactly a year after the Golden Jubilee, Douglas Horsfall died. He is buried, as is Fr. Elcum, in Toxteth Park Cemetery and every year on the Sunday closest to St. Pancras' Day (May 12<sup>th</sup>), the Priest and people of St. Agnes' observe the Vespers of the Dead at their graves.

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 brought some terrible times for the people of Liverpool, which was a particular target for the Luftwaffe because of its importance as a port. Many people lost their lives and several important buildings – including two of the churches founded by Robert Horsfall, namely Christ Church Great Homer Street and St. James-the-Less Kirkdale – were destroyed. Thankfully St. Agnes' came through the war intact and undamaged.

## THE 1950s AND 1960s

The 1950s and 1960s are reasonably well documented thanks to the existence of the (now slightly mouldy and dog-eared) Parochial Church Council Minute Book of the period, kindly loaned to the author for the purpose of researching this book, and to Fr. Ian Forrester's entertaining memoir "Some Years at Saint Agnes' Church Liverpool", which he wrote to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ordination of Fr. Herman Annis. Both of these sources have been drawn upon heavily in the paragraphs which follow.

Fr. Joseph French Parker became Vicar of St. Agnes' in 1953; this is the starting point for both the Minute Book and Fr. Forrester's reminiscence - the latter describing him as having "set about revitalising a place which before, during and after the Second World War had become joyless and moribund". He brought in the Franciscans to run a parish mission, which seems to have been successful in giving the church a renewed vision and vigour for ministry to its parish.

Fr. Parker also had to tackle the need for restoration of the church building which was well in to its seventh decade and was starting to show the effects of the damp which has plagued it throughout its existence. A sum of £10,000 was needed for the work and Fr. Parker enlisted the help of a local "celebrity" to get the appeal off to a good start.

Sir Alfred Shennan was a noted architect – he designed Greenbank Drive Synagogue, about 800m from St. Agnes', in the late 1930s – and a leading political figure on Liverpool City Council, which had been controlled by the Conservatives since 1895. Alderman Shennan was prevailed upon to open a fund raising bazaar which must have been a success as by the end of 1953 the sum of £1,097 had been banked towards the work.

In 1954 the Diocese of Liverpool contributed £100 toward the restoration fund (it was generous in helping struggling churches in those days) and the Historic Churches Preservation Trust (HCPT) confirmed that the church would be eligible for some grant assistance. The HCPT, by the way, was the forerunner of today's National Churches Trust which generously supported the 2017 work to the roof and rainwater goods.

It was agreed in 1954 that the Sanctuary lamps should be raised above the level of the reredos, and this was accomplished by the simple expedient of shortening the chains by which they were suspended. Whilst this was an improvement in terms of sight lines it meant that a ladder was required in order to light the lamps and the nuisance value of this was such that the matter went back to the PCC for discussion; the matter was subsequently dealt with by the installation of a pulley system which remains in use today.

In September 1954 the (unnamed) church architect produced a report into the damp flooring and crumbling stonework which prescribed re-flooring the church with a bitumen layer underneath the new floor. Some of the mechanics of stone erosion were not understood sixty years ago and, whilst we would not take this approach nowadays, it was considered an appropriate intervention at the time.

We cannot leave 1954 without mentioning the funeral of one Lavinia Crawford who in 1910 had served a prison sentence for her activities in the Suffragette movement. This is in fact an episode from June Francis' 2013 novel *Memories Are Made Of This*<sup>(9)</sup> which as

far as we are aware is St. Agnes' only appearance in a work of fiction. It is pleasing that Ms. Francis chose our church for the funeral of such an interesting character!

In 1955 wet rot, an inevitable consequence of the damp conditions, was discovered in the church and the installation of a hot air heating system was decided upon as the best approach to making the building warmer and drier.

In 1957 the PCC passed a Resolution allowing the Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament in the Lady Chapel subject to the approval of the Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Clifford Martin; this was received shortly afterwards.

By January 1958 it was reported to the PCC that the new heating system was costing £2,10s per week less to run than the previous coke-fired one but that parts of the church were intolerably cold during the winter. Sixty years on, they still are!

An interesting feature of St. Agnes' is the Minstrels' Gallery to the south side of the Lady Chapel. Late in 1959 a report was given to the PCC stating that its removal would not cause serious damage to the wall, but no answer is given to the question of why it was being considered for removal; thankfully this idea came to nothing and it remains *in situ*.

In October 1960 Fr. Parker announced to the PCC that he had accepted the post of Vicar of All Saints, West Bromwich, and would be leaving early in 1961. The PCC Minutes record a list of criteria to be applied to his replacement, one of which was that "the traditions of Church established over the last 9 years should be continued".

It is clear from reading Fr. Forrester's memoir that the next Vicar of St. Agnes', Fr. Cyril Leighton, did not continue the traditions which had developed during Fr. Parker's incumbency, and some serious tensions arose as a result. It is, however, interesting to note from the PCC Minutes that in March 1961 it was agreed to offer the Incumbency to the Rev. A.G. Livesley, of whom nothing more is recorded; on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 1961 Fr. Leighton was introduced as the new Vicar.

In the early 1960s the Parish Communion Movement was gaining the ascendancy in the Church of England. This movement sought to move away from the traditionally accepted idea that Holy Communion was primarily an act of individual devotion and instead make it the central focus of the corporate worship life of the parish. Ultimately it was successful in its aims, but sixty years ago this was quite controversial. Fr. Cyril Leighton was a keen proponent of the Movement and moved quickly to establish Parish Communion (the term "Mass" was not used then) as the main Sunday morning service.

Two significant donations made by St. Agnes' in 1962 were of £50 to the St. Chad's College Building Appeal and £20 to St. Margaret's Church, Anfield. Whilst the donation to St. Chad's was to help the College, founded by Douglas Horsfall, to cope with expansion, that to St. Margaret's was to help build a replacement for the elegant 1860s Audsley Brothers church following its destruction by fire.

As Fr. Leighton's ministry progresses we can discern a definite change of emphasis from the time of Fr. Parker; there is much more in the PCC minutes about "Christian stewardship" and a lot less about building fabric issues and the state of the heating.

From 1963 Fr. Leighton allocated the Harvest Festival collection to the relief of “People less fortunate” rather than spending it on flowers as hitherto. From November 1963 the Sunday service pattern was to be:

8.00am	Communion (said)
10.00am	Parish Communion (sung)
6.30pm	Evensong (sung)

Fr. Forrester tells us that the change of the principal service to 10am (from 11) made life difficult for those who relied upon public transport to get to church, as Liverpool Corporation Passenger Transport buses didn’t roll out of the depot until quite late on a Sunday morning.

Fr. Herman North Annis became Curate of St. Agnes’ in 1967. He had been ordained two years earlier and had served his title at St. Augustine’s, Kilburn, a famous Anglo-Catholic church, coincidentally also designed by John Loughborough Pearson.

When Fr. Leighton left in 1970, Fr. Annis became Vicar. It was Fr. Annis who introduced the first statue of Mary in to the church and encouraged the Marian devotion amongst the congregation. He instigated the annual parish pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham in Norfolk (this continues today, taking place in June each year) and brought incense into regular use as part of the liturgy.



## THE 1970s AND 1980s

### CHILDWALL DEANERY

#### Allocation of 1974 Quota Based on 1972 Accounts

Parish	Total Income	Allowance	Assessable Income	Quota
Aigbuth, St. Anne	5,988	2,075	3,913	980
Allerton, All Hallows	10,111	3,597	6,514	1,640
Childwall, All Saints	13,606	6,661	6,945	1,750
Childwall, St. David	4,099	1,811	2,288	580
Grassendale, St. Mary	6,843	2,014	4,829	1,210
Springwood, All Saints	2,250	514	1,736	430
Messley Hill, Ss. Matthew & James	8,218	3,002	5,216	1,310
Messley Hill, St. Barnabas	4,468	2,486	1,982	500
Toxteth, Christ Church	2,569	1,164	1,405	350
Toxteth, St. Agnes	2,706	821	1,885	470
Toxteth, St. Andrew	1,748	649	1,099	280
Toxteth, St. Michael	2,308	761	1,547	390
Woolton, St. Peter	11,661	7,203	4,458	1,120
Wavertree, Holy Trinity	6,102	2,683	3,419	860
Wavertree, St. Bridget	2,069	323	1,746	440
Wavertree, St. Mary	1,910	606	1,304	330
Wavertree, St. Thomas	1,359	368	991	250
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>88,015</b>	<b>36,738</b>	<b>51,277</b>	<b>12,890</b>

An interesting document which came to light during the research for this book was a list (above) of the "quotas" which each church in the Childwall Deanery had to pay in to Diocesan funds in order to support mission and ministry in 1974 – in our case £470. The amount was calculated by taking the church's income for 1972, deducting an "allowance" and then multiplying the remainder by 0.25. The quota has long since been replaced by Parish Share; had the method of calculation remained the same, our 2017 Parish Share would have been less than half of what we actually paid!

Two of the churches on this list no longer exist: Toxteth, St. Andrew, closed in the 1980s and Wavertree, St. Thomas, in 2006. The Childwall Deanery itself no longer exists, its churches having been split between Toxteth & Wavertree and Liverpool South Deaneries when the boundaries were revised some years ago.

In 1975 St. Agnes' was inscribed in the National Heritage List (NHL) as a Grade I Listed Building, the highest category, reflecting its immense architectural interest and significance. Only 2.5% of the 400,000 or so buildings on the NHL are considered sufficiently important to merit this category of Listing.

The period 1979 – 1982 is taken up with more building repairs along with a proposal to develop the Church Hall into a social centre complete with a licensed bar. The wood block floor was installed at this time along with damp courses, and some crumbling internal pillar bases were repaired. A plan to introduce glass screens to separate the narthex (the area under the gallery) from the rest of the church with glass screens came to nothing – a pity as it would have helped to draught-proof the church and keep the heat in.

Fr. Annis left in 1982 to take up an Incumbency in the Diocese of Norwich, but he remains a beloved member of the St. Agnes' family to this day, celebrating his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in July 2018. He was succeeded by Fr. Russell Frost.



*An artist's impression of the proposed Church Hall bar / lounge development of 1981.*  
(Courtesy of Liverpool Diocesan Advisory Committee)

In 1985 the church celebrated its Centenary; it was at this time that the dedication was formally changed to "St. Agnes & St. Pancras" to honour the former Chapel-of-Ease which still existed at that time as the School Hall at Litherdale Road Infants' School.

In 1987 an advertisement went out in the local *Mersey mart* free newspaper in the hope of recruiting new members to the choir; one of those who responded was a sixteen year-old pupil of the Liverpool Blue Coat School who had absolutely no idea that 30 years later he would project manage major repairs at the church and then write a book about it!

By 1987 the Sunday service pattern consisted of Parish Mass at 10am and Solemn Evensong with the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at 6.30pm; Parish Mass regularly attracted a congregation of around 100. Both services were sung; the Choir which consisted of around 20 boys and men was trained and conducted by Alan Williams and the organ was played by Nick Davies.

The choir had a very good reputation and was frequently invited to sing elsewhere and to perform in concerts. The author has fond memories of a particularly cold Saturday in February 1988 at St. Asaph Cathedral and of a much warmer week-long stint at Lincoln Cathedral in August of that year, by which time Alan Williams had moved on; his replacement as Choirmaster was Andrew Small. It was on the Lincoln trip that the Adam and Eve pub became the scene of a momentous event in the author's life – his first pint of Real Ale! As he was only 17, the name of the purchaser must go unrecorded here.

There are two small plaques affixed to the choir stalls which commemorate much-loved members of the Choir from that era: J. Arthur Carr (Alto) and Jack Crane (Tenor).

Fr. Russell Frost left St. Agnes' in 1989 and subsequently left the Church of England to continue his ministry in the Roman Catholic Church; he is now based in East Anglia and several of his sermons are available on YouTube. His successor was Fr. Douglas McKittrick from the nearby church of St. Stephen with St. Catherine, Grove Street<sup>(10)</sup>, once a fine Anglo-Catholic church but by then doomed through a combination of building fabric problems and the near-total depopulation of its parish as its high-density housing was torn down for 'redevelopment'.

In 1994 Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber founded the Open Churches Trust which assisted churches in opening their doors to the public outside the times of regular worship services; St. Agnes' was one of the first churches to take advantage of this support and, for a time, was regularly open. The opening of the church for two days per week, on Wednesdays and Fridays, was resumed in 2018 under the terms of the agreement signed with the Heritage Lottery Fund for the receipt of repair funds.

1997 saw Fr. McKittrick leave Liverpool to take up a post in Brighton; he was succeeded by Fr. Stephen Webb who, prior to his ordination, had been a bus driver. In 2001 the Mystery Worshipper from the "Ship of Fools" website visited St. Agnes<sup>(11)</sup> and commented upon how remarkable it was that the church had experienced 50% growth in two years under Fr. Webb's ministry.

Fr. Lee Martin Daniels joined as curate in 2001 and served until 2005, effectively acting as Vicar during the time between Fr. Webb's departure in 2002 and the arrival of Fr. Christopher Cook as Priest-in-Charge in 2004 (Vicar from 2006).

Fr. Cook's ministry to the people of L17 was book-ended by two phases of roof repair work. The first, the re-roofing of the north nave and transepts funded by English Heritage, was underway when he arrived and the second, our HLF-funded project to re-roof the south nave and transepts and repair the high level stonework at the west end, was in preparation as he retired in August 2016.

Fr. Cook has a great affinity with, and compassion for, the persecuted Christians of the Middle East and during his time here the church became a place of care and spiritual nurture for many asylum seekers, principally from Iran. St. Agnes' built up a good relationship with the Coptic (Egyptian) Orthodox Church which used the Parish Hall for worship for several years, until it acquired its own premises – the former St. Paul's, Stoneycroft, coincidentally another foundation of Douglas Horsfall's – in 2016.

To bring the story right up-to-date, we were delighted to welcome Fr. Derek Lloyd as our Priest on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017; his post combines his role as Parish Priest with that of the Diocese's Catholic Missioner. There are challenges ahead: the financial situation continues to be tight and there are major repairs necessary to the Parish Hall as well as a further phase of works in the church itself.

We hope that, when a future version of this book is published in 50 or 100 years' time, our generation will be judged to have been good stewards both of the glorious building and of the Church's mission in our small corner of the great city of Liverpool.



## THE ARCHITECTURE

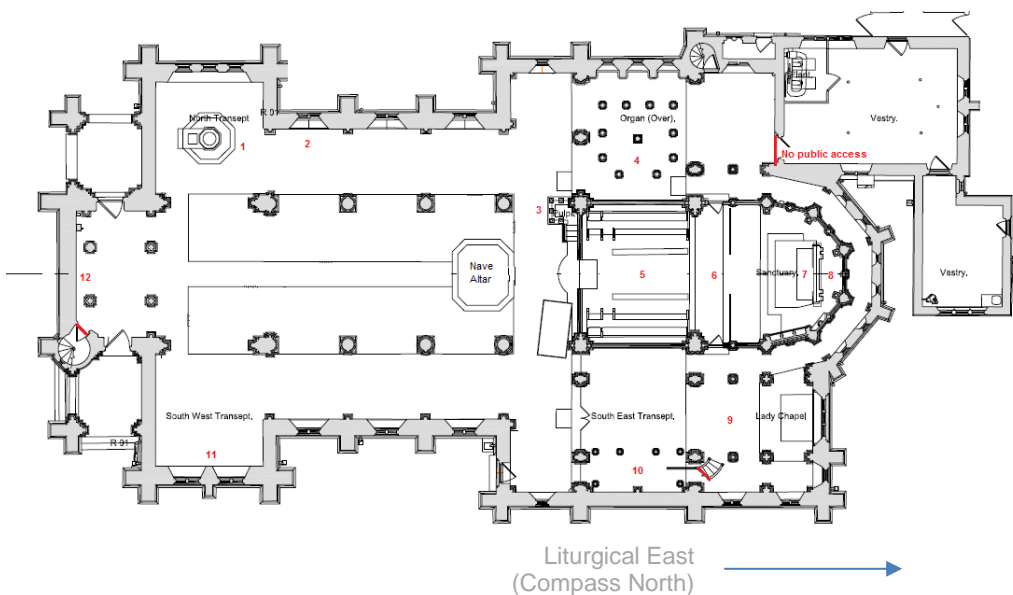


The Horsfall family had established a tradition of commissioning nationally-known architects to build their churches: E.H. Shellard (Christ Church, Great Homer Street), G.E. Street (St. Margaret, Toxteth) and Culshaw & Sumners (Christ Church, Linnet Lane), for example. Douglas Horsfall continued this tradition by employing John Loughborough Pearson (1817-1897) to design St. Agnes'.

Pearson, born in Brussels and trained in London under Philip Hardwick who designed the Euston Arch, had progressed from building fairly standard geometric churches to mastery of the Gothic Revival. His projects had included St. Augustine, Kilburn (1871, and the church where Fr. Annis served his title) and St. Michael, Croydon (1880). He was working on Truro Cathedral when he was given the commission for St. Agnes'. There are very strong external similarities between the Croydon church and St. Agnes', whilst internally our church closely resembles Truro Cathedral, albeit scaled-down somewhat.

An important thing to note about St. Agnes' is its orientation. It is normal for a church to be oriented on an east-west axis (or as close to that as possible) with the altar at the east. The constraints of the site on which St. Agnes' Church stands are such that it had to be built on a north-south axis with the altar at the north; this is evident on a summer Sunday morning when the light streams through the stained glass windows to the right as viewed from the congregation's perspective.

The convention is still to refer to the altar as being to the East ("Liturgical East") with the other points following round, so the elevation facing Buckingham Avenue is South, etc.



*Plan showing the basic layout of the church. The numbers refer to points on the self-guided tour in our Izi-Travel mobile phone app.*

The exterior of St. Agnes' uses materials typical of late Victorian Liverpool: pressed red brick with sandstone details. The roof is of Rosemary clay tiles – roughly 60,000 of them, of which around 27,000 were replaced in 2017.

There is no tower or spire, but a lead-covered timber flèche which houses the bell (recently brought back in to use to summon the faithful to worship) is combined with two turrets at the east end to give the church its distinctive appearance.



Placing the churches of St. Michael, Croydon and St. Agnes alongside each other the similarities between the two churches' east ends may easily be seen. Shared features include the turrets, polygonal chancel, full-height transepts and the provision of an ambulatory. The ambulatory is a passageway which allows servers to get from one side to the other without walking in front of the high altar and results in the distinctive "bulge" at low level below the east windows. The materials used are different though: in Croydon brown London brick was used with grey sandstone dressings and (whilst not evident from the photograph above) copper for the fleche.

It is no coincidence that most of Pearson's churches<sup>(12)</sup> belong to the distinctive Anglo-Catholic tradition for the architect was himself a devoted Christian of that persuasion who took seriously the Psalmist's exhortation to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, insisting upon great attention to detail and use of the best materials available. The interior of St. Agnes' church is generally regarded as one of his best, and the red brick exterior gives no clues as to what it is like inside.

The interior of the church is of Caen stone; Mary Rae, a grand-daughter of our Founder attests to this<sup>(13)</sup> although the author has also been told that it is of Bath stone. Both are fine-grained limestones laid down during the Jurassic period around 170 to 175 million years ago, both are eminently suitable for carving and both have a lovely natural honey colour.

Whichever is the case there is no disputing the grace and beauty of what Pearson achieved with the stone; the lofty quadripartite vaults which reach their apex some 13.5m above the floor call to mind the great French Gothic cathedrals of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century such as Amiens or Reims. St. Agnes shares another interesting architectural feature with these two great French churches: the Triforium gallery which runs all the way around the church just below the level of the clerestory windows. It is possible to get right round the church via the Triforium – the author did it as a slim seventeen year-old but would be reluctant to risk getting stuck in its narrow passageways nowadays following the onset of middle-aged portliness.

At the West end there is a gallery which was originally used by members of the Horsfall family; into the 1980s it was occasionally used by the choir as an alternative to the stalls but more recently it has become disused and is primarily a storage space. Underneath the gallery, an area which has seen some tidying up as part of the 2017 project, the attention to detail of Pearson's stonemasons can be inspected at close quarters.

In addition to the Caen stone, other stones are used in specific parts of the church to great effect. The oldest of these is the black fossil-bearing limestone used for the plinth to the font and for the chancel steps. It is from the Staffordshire Moorlands and dates back some 325 million years to the Carboniferous period. It is full of fossils of the sea life of that era. Its use for the font plinth is interesting: it says that just as life on earth evolved out of the life of the sea, so the Christian life evolves out of the waters of Holy Baptism. Whether or not this was a conscious connection is a matter for conjecture.

Also worthy of note is the polychromic marble used for the ornate chancel floor. This has been compared to the work of the Cosmati of Rome, a family of architects and sculptors, active between around 1180 and 1300, who were noted for their church floors.

To complete the palette of stone used in the construction of this glorious church, the font and pulpit are both of alabaster; to be specific, they are of the gypsum form of alabaster probably from the quarry at Fauld, near Burton-on-Trent in Staffordshire. This translucent stone takes carving very well and both the font and pulpit are ornately carved, the former with scenes from Bible stories referring to baptism, the latter with figures of Christ, the Saints and the Church Fathers. One or two of the figures on the pulpit, including that of Our Lord Himself, are missing fingers and other appendages due possibly to some over-enthusiastic cleaning over the years, or maybe to impact from a carelessly-swung thurible. Despite this minor damage the pulpit well repays careful study, as does the font.

## CORBELS

In 1910, to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the church's consecration, our Founder gifted to St. Agnes' a set of carved corbels. Corbels were originally used in the Middle Ages as brackets for carrying other architectural features and often depicted faces, Bible stories or mythical beings; the ones at St. Agnes' are purely decorative. They are unashamedly Medieval in their style and they also reflect Mr. Horsfall's sense of humour; most are easy to spot but a couple require a bit of effort to find.



One of the most interesting and detailed scenes is Noah's Ark (*above*) surrounded by the head and tail of an extremely fierce-looking sea creature. A dove can be seen flying out of the Ark in order to search for dry land which would signify the end of the Flood. Meanwhile in the SW transept another scary being (*below*) is chasing a little dog who disappears into the column at the end of the transept for safety. You can see the dog's head on the other side of the church as he emerges into the NW Transept!



Douglas Horsfall was obviously familiar with Lincoln Cathedral, built from 1185 and still one of the crowning glories of English architecture. It features on the St. Hugh of Lincoln window but one of its quirkier architectural features is replicated here in one of the corbels: this is the slightly malevolent-looking imp in the Sanctuary (*next page, top left*)..

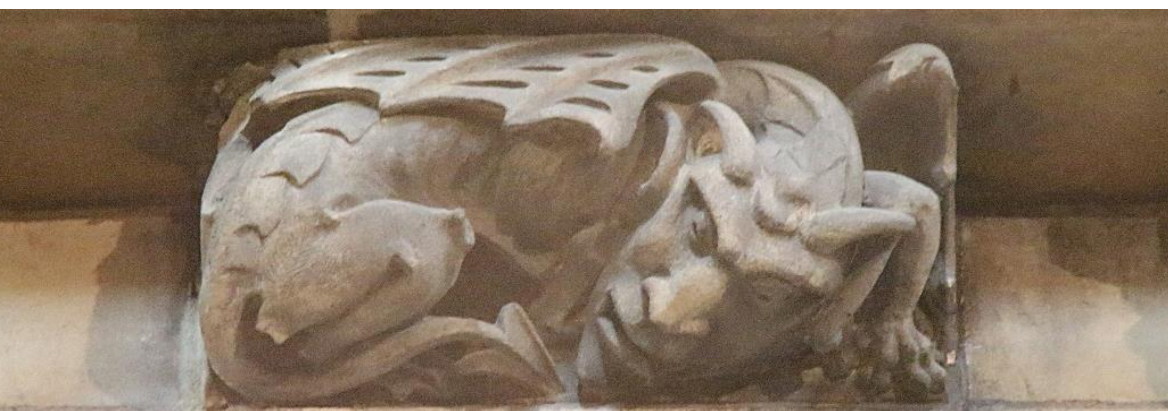


Not far from the Imp, tucked away on a wall somewhat hidden by the organ balcony, is Douglas Horsfall's "signature" – an amusing word play on his family's name in the form of a falling horse. It is not easy to see, never mind get a decent picture! (*centre left*).

The full list of the corbels, for the benefit of anyone who wants to tick them off, is as follows:

- The all-seeing eye (keeping watch to make sure the choirboys are behaving during the service!)
- An ear, listening to the lovely music
- A skeleton, minus skull
- A skull, presumably the one missing from the skeleton
- Noah's Ark and the sea creature
- A fish
- The small dog's head
- The small dog's *derrière*
- The creature chasing the poor little dog
- A devil with dragon's wings and a pointed tail
- A cherub's head with a cross
- The face of a monk
- A slightly grotesque face (a naughty choirboy?)
- The winged head of an angel
- The Imp
- The falling horse.

Visitors, especially young ones, enjoy looking for the corbels so we are not going to spoil the fun by giving away all their locations here!



## STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

It is easy for a visitor to be so awed by the architecture of St. Agnes & St. Pancras as to overlook the stained glass windows which, as a collection, are among the best in the North West of England.

Many are the work of the eminent and prolific Victorian designer Charles Eamer Kempe (1837-1907), or of his studio. Kempe's work tends to be associated with Tractarian (Anglo-Catholic) churches and is notable for the attention to fine detail shown in the sumptuous fabrics in which he dresses his subjects, the intricate feathers in his angels' wings and the jewel-like beads of glass used in embellishments. But for his terrible stammer<sup>(14)</sup>, Kempe would have been ordained and his talent for church decoration would never have been developed. As you look at the wonderful glass in our church, reflect upon what a tragedy this would have been.



The six aisle windows are by Kempe's chief designer, Edward Carter. An example is the window in the North aisle depicting an angel releasing St. Peter from prison (*left*), a story told in Chapter 12 of the Acts of The Apostles. The use of light and colour is immediately evident, highlighting the glory of the heavenly visitor against the dingy backdrop of the dungeon. The exquisite peacock feathers of the angel's wings and the prints which adorn the clothes of the two principal figures are classic Kempe details. Look at the clasp holding the angel's cape in place: each of the glass beads used was individually made, etched before and after the glass was fired<sup>(15)</sup>.

There is a mystery attached to this window. The Revd. Robert Leicester, to the memory of whose four daughters the window is dedicated, never served at St. Agnes'. He was Rector of St. Peter's, Woolton, in the 1830s and it is thought that the window was destined for that church; how and why it came to be at our church is unknown.

The Restoration Project brought another Carter window back to life after a long absence. This is the delightful window (1887) in Pre-Raphaelite style depicting our Patron St. Agnes. This had become invisible as a *leylandii* tree next to the church grew up, preventing any light from getting through, and the author became the first person to see the figure of St. Agnes in over twenty years when the tree was removed in March 2017 to make way for scaffolding.

It is noteworthy that even in the less heavily trafficked areas of the church there are some very fine windows indeed. Under the organ loft the three Saints – Hugh of Lincoln, Boniface (right) and Gregory – are all by Kempe himself, as are the windows depicting St. Catherine and St. Pancras high on the east-facing wall of the SW Transept near the *Mothers in Israel* window. These are not easy to see from ground level but are clearly visible from the gallery.

In the Ambulatory, a passageway behind the High Altar which is not intended as a public area at all, there are some fine 1887 windows by Edward Carter featuring the sumptuous clothing and pearls which the Kempe studio of the late 1880s bestowed upon many of the subjects of its windows.

After 1893, John Lisle replaced Carter as Kempe's chief designer. He ultimately took over the studio following Kempe's death in 1907 and his work, which uses a noticeably lighter palette, also features at St. Agnes': his is the large Passion window, above the Musicians' Loft, which was given in memory of our Founder's brother Charles E. Horsfall.

The two windows in the south wall of the Lady Chapel each contain a small black dog, running. This is the mark of Herbert Bryans who worked for Kempe until he left to set up his own studio in 1896.

Perhaps the most interesting windows are the Great West Window by A.G. Moore, the Universal Church Window in a medieval style, and the *Mothers in Israel* window, each of which is discussed in more detail in the pages which follow.



## THE GREAT WEST WINDOW

The Great West Window was given to St. Agnes' in 1935 to mark the Silver Jubilee of the church's consecration. The donor was our Founder, Douglas Horsfall, in thanks for having lived to see the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the church – something which was practically, if not completely, unheard of.



*Inscriptions from the Great West Window.*

The window features the likenesses of Robert Horsfall (as St. Chad, holding a model of the church) and Rev. Charles Cunningham Elcum (as St. Luke), and was executed by A. G. Moore in his studio at Hope Street, Liverpool.

There is a serious mistake on this window. The Archangels Gabriel and Michael have somehow had their names transposed such that the peaceful messenger Gabriel is apparently holding a sword and the mighty warrior Michael a flower! Quite when this mix-up was first spotted is unknown but it was obviously after the window had been installed.

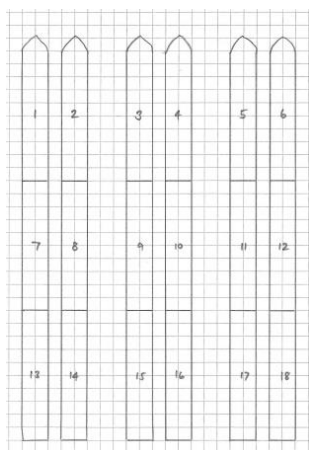
During the restoration work of 2017, the opportunity was taken to inspect the Great West Window at close quarters and it was found to be in poor condition: the iron saddle bars which give the window its strength to resist high winds are badly corroded, there are holes in the glass (some of which have been filled-in with lumps of putty) and the stone mullions are showing signs of erosion. The cost of repairs, not including the scaffolding needed to access the window, has been estimated at £27K.



*Detail from one of the close-up photos taken of the Great West Window from outside.*



*The Great West Window, photographed from the High Altar.*



### KEY TO THE GREAT WEST WINDOW

1 – St. Agnes; 2 – St. Pancras; 3 – St. Gabriel (incorrectly named as Michael); 4 – St. Michael (incorrectly named as Gabriel); 5 – St. Faith; 6 – St. Paul.

7 – St. Peter; 8 – St. Nicholas; 9 – The Blessed Virgin Mary; 10 – The King of Kings, Jesus Christ; 11 – St. Augustine; 12 – St. Gregory.

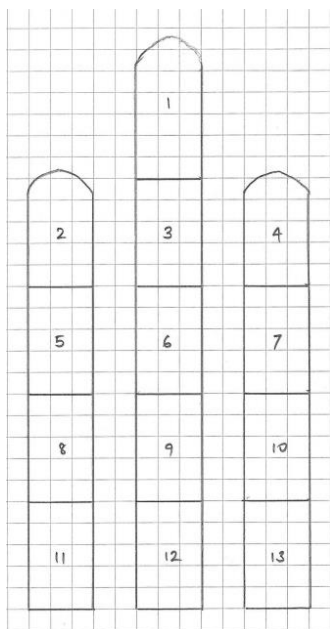
13 – St. Catherine of Alexandria; 14 – St. Margaret; 15 – St. Chad (likeness of Robert Horsfall); 16 – St. Luke (likeness of Rev. C.C. Elcum); 17 – St. Cecilia; 18 – St. George.

## THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH WINDOW (NW TRANSEPT)

This window illustrates the "one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church" which exists in Heaven and on earth and of which St. Agnes & St. Pancras is a part. The window features twelve saints of the early Church with Christ, the King of Glory, at the head.

The saints are linked by the Latin motto TE PER ORBEM TERRARUM SANCTA CONFITETUR ECCLESIA (The holy Church throughout the world acclaims You) which is a line from the ancient *Te Deum* hymn.

Not all the saints' names are easily legible from ground level, and some of the churches they represent are a bit obscure these days.



### KEY TO THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH WINDOW

- 1 – Jesus Christ: REX GLORIAE (the King of Glory).
- 2 – St. Ignatius of Antioch: ECCLESIA ANTIOCH. (the Church at Antioch).
- 3 – St. Gregory: ECCLESIA ROMANA (the Roman Church).
- 4 – St. John Chrysostom: ECCLESIA CONSTANT. (the Church at Constantinople).
- 5 – St. Cyril: ECCLESIA ALEXAND. (the Church in Alexandria).
- 6 – St. Augustine of Hippo: ECCLESIA HIPPENSIS (the Church of Hippo, now part of modern Algeria).
- 7 – St. Ambrose: ECCLESIA MEDIOLANS. (the Church of Milan).
- 8 – St. Virgilius of Arles: ECCLESIA GALLICA (the Church in Gaul, now modern France).
- 9 – St. Boniface: ECCLESIA GERMANICA (the German Church).

10 – St. Cyprian: ECCLESIA CARTHAG. (the Church at Carthage, now part of Tunisia).

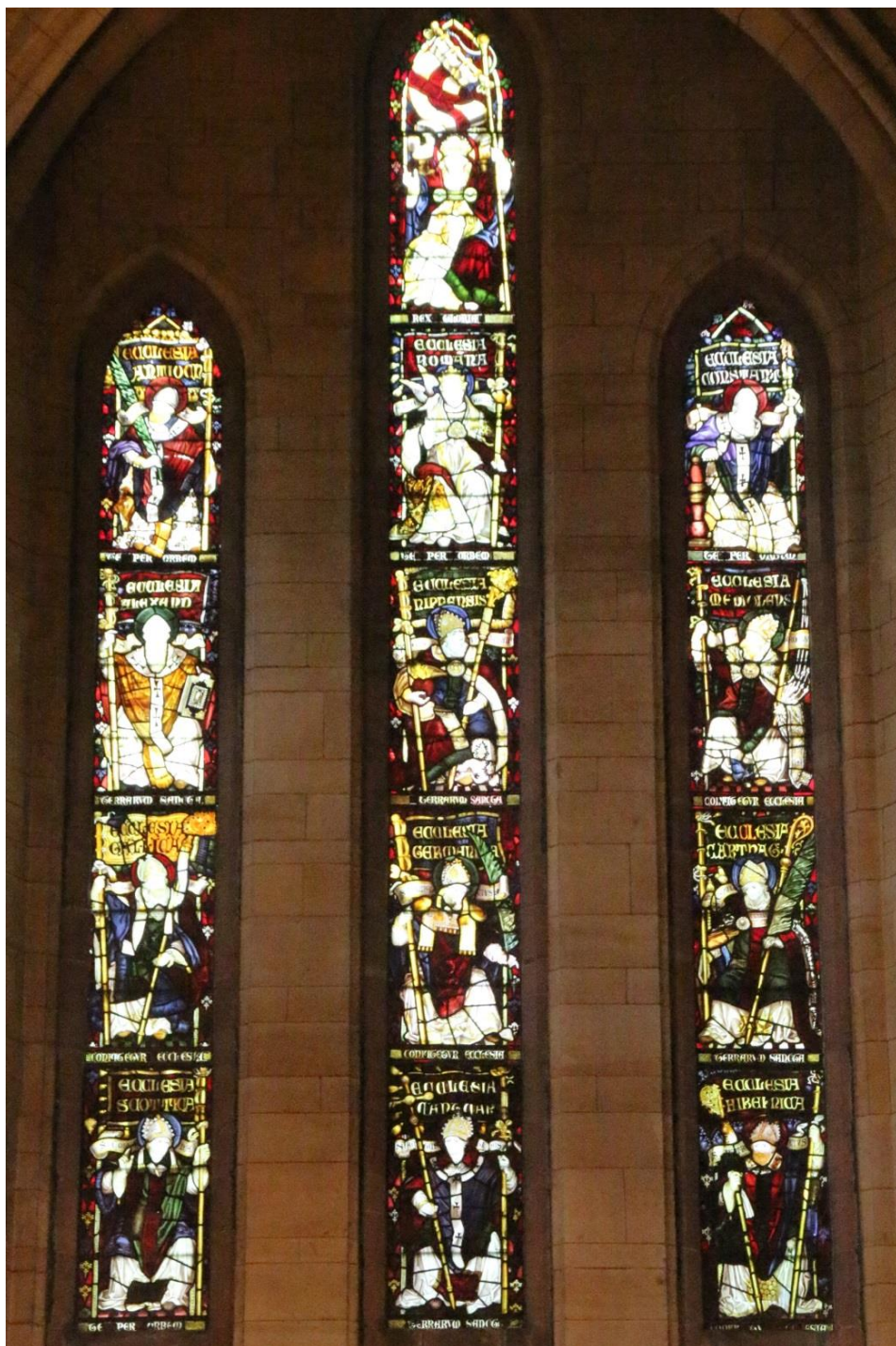
11 – St. Columba: ECCLESIA SCOTTICA (the Scottish Church).

12 – St. Augustine: ECCLESIA CANTUAR. (the Church at Canterbury, i.e. the early English Church).

13 – St. Patrick: ECCLESIA HIBERNICA (the Irish Church).

There cannot be many Anglican churches with a window depicting St. Virgilius, Archbishop of Arles (d. 610), and the author would be delighted to hear of any others!

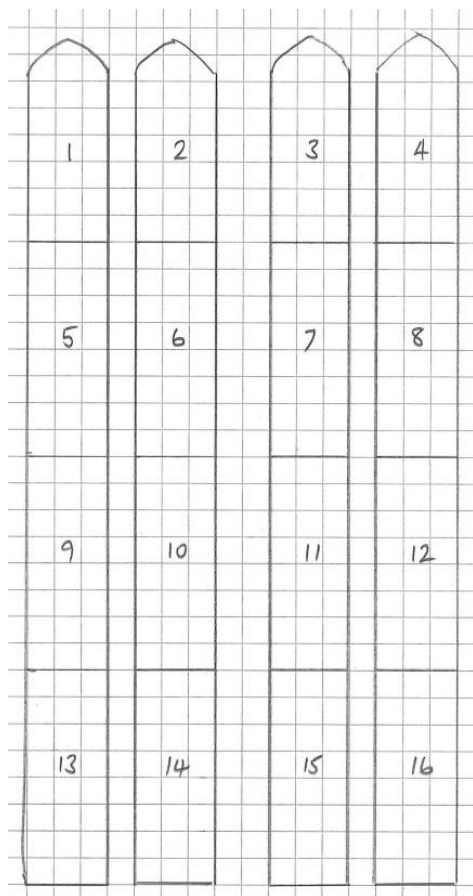
It is worth noting that some of the Latin above is in an abbreviated form in order to fit the available space, so CANTUAR. is short for CANTUARIENSIS, MEDIOLANS. for MEDIOLANENSIS, etc.



## THE MOTHERS IN ISRAEL WINDOW (SW TRANSEPT)

This fine window of two pairs of two lancets in plate tracery was given by Douglas Horsfall in memory of his mother Emily who died in 1902. Emily Horsfall had worked tirelessly for St. Agnes' Church in the last few years of her life; her contributions included a beautiful set of altar linen which is now in the care of Liverpool Museum.

The window celebrates sixteen women whose stories are told in the Bible, eight from the Old Testament and eight from the New Testament. The inscription reads "To the honour and glory of Almighty God and in loving memory of Emily Horsfall who entered into rest 1<sup>st</sup> June mcmii. Requiescat in pace [May she rest in peace]".



### KEY TO THE MOTHERS IN ISRAEL WINDOW

- 1 – RUTH
- 2 – SARAH with ISAAC
- 3 – REBECCA
- 4 – RACHEL
- 5 – MIRIAM
- 6 – HANNAH with SAMUEL
- 7 – DEBORAH
- 8 – ESTHER
- 9 – THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
- 10 – ANNA the PROPHETESS
- 11 – ST. ELIZABETH mother of JOHN THE BAPTIST
- 12 – SALOME
- 13 – ST. MARTHA
- 14 – ST. MARY OF BETHANY
- 15 – ST. MARY MAGDALENE (who was NEVER a woman of ill repute – this is a lie concocted in 1591 which has no authority in Scripture or the early church traditions)
- 16 – DORCAS

The Salome depicted here is not, of course, the woman of that name who demanded and received the head of St. John The Baptist from her depraved father Herod II. Our Salome is a follower of Jesus who was present at His crucifixion: in Apocryphal writings she also features as one of the first witnesses to the Virgin Birth, which suggests she may well have been a sister or other close relative of the Blessed Virgin Mary.



## A UNIQUE CLUSTER OF GRADE I CHURCHES

A unique feature of this part of South Liverpool is that there are three Grade I Listed church buildings within 350m of each other. Turn left out of St. Agnes' and walk 100m along Ullet Road and you will come to the Unitarian Church and from there it is just 250m via Rutland Avenue to St. Clare's Catholic Church.

The Unitarian Church (*left*) was built in 1899 by Thomas and Percy Worthington; the hall on the same site opened three years later. The church and hall are linked by the elaborately-decorated library and the buildings form three sides of a square around a central garden; this is regarded as one of the finest Nonconformist churches in the country. The church has a superb collection of Burne-Jones windows.

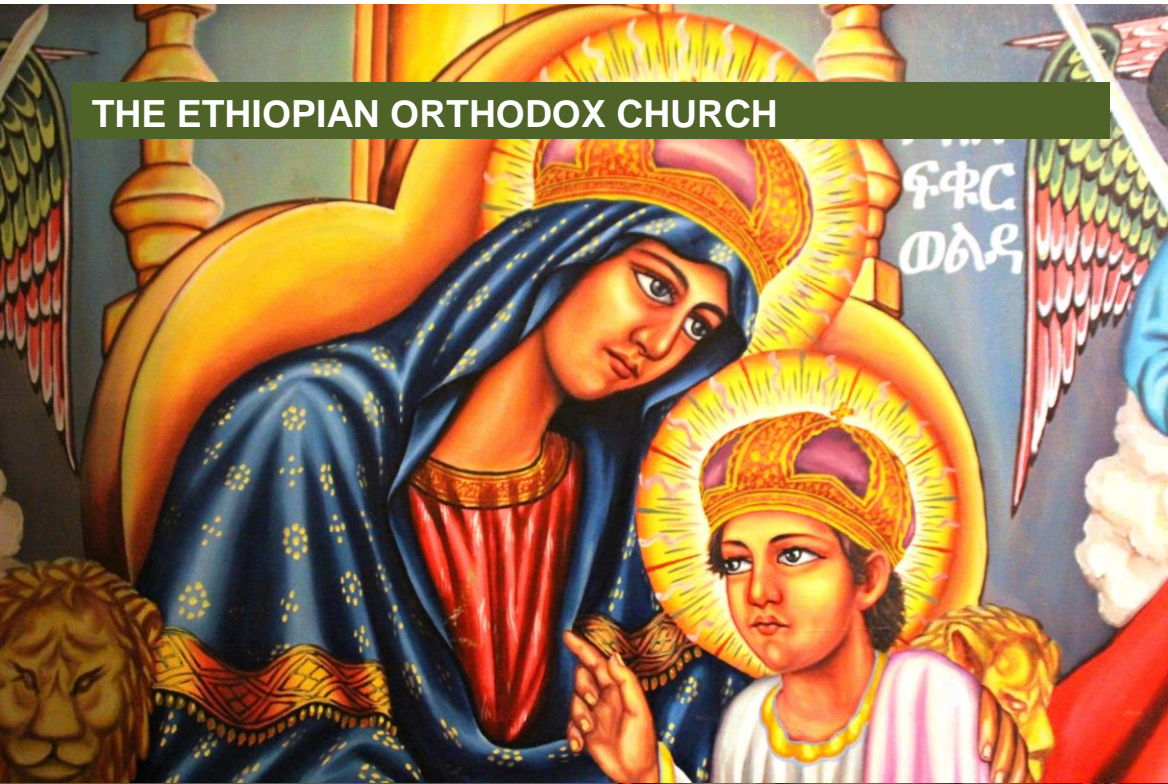
The church is replete with associations with famous Liverpool people: William Roscoe, William Rathbone and George Holt all worshipped here, among others. More recently, in 2012, the first civil partnership to be registered on religious premises in the UK took place when Warren Hartley and Kieran Bohan exchanged their vows.



St. Clare's (*right*) is by Leonard Stokes and was built in 1891. Although completed only five years after St. Agnes', the Gothic employed by Stokes shows the first exciting hints of the Modernism to come in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. St. Clare's is, in terms of the history of church architecture, a fascinating link between traditional and modern styles.

If one were to visit, in order, St. Agnes', St. Clare's and finally Francis Xavier Velarde's St. Matthew, Clubmoor of 1930 (or Bernard Miller's St. Christopher, Norris Green, of 1932), the importance of Stokes' work in this context would become immediately apparent.

# THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



St. Agnes' Church contains several icons belonging to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church of St. Tekle Haimanot which has used our building for worship since 2007. Ethiopian Christians from all over Liverpool, the Wirral and beyond come here in large numbers on the first Saturday of each month, and on Sunday afternoons, to worship.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church follows an ancient form of Christianity which dates back to the 4<sup>th</sup> Century. Drums are used to accompany the singing, and the liturgy takes place in the Amharic language.

St. Tekle Haimanot is one of the most important Ethiopian Saints, a 13<sup>th</sup> Century priest known for his devotion to prayer and his acts of Christian charity. He lived to the remarkable age of 99 years and his body is enshrined at the monastery of Debre Libanos, a major site of pilgrimage near the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa.



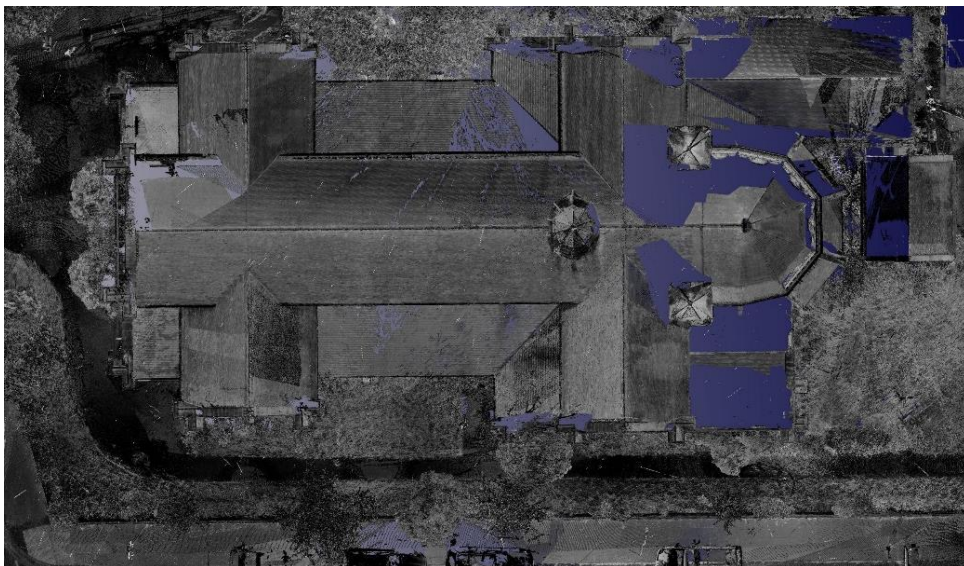
## CONSERVATION & REPAIR

A building like St. Agnes' takes a lot of looking after and from time to time major repairs are needed as important building elements come to the end of their lives. Water is the most potent enemy faced by church buildings<sup>(16)</sup> and so keeping it out of the building structure is critically important. The north-facing half of the roof was replaced in 2004/5 when it became life-expired.

In 2013 the Quinquennial Inspection revealed that the south (Buckingham Avenue) side roof needed replacing. Some high-level stonework was in poor condition and therefore potentially unsafe and the rainwater goods were also showing their age. Inside the church many of the quarry tiles in the floor had cracked as the wood block flooring to either side had expanded through rising damp. There was also the worrying structural cracking to the Bath stone walls. This was going to be expensive.

All of the day-to-day running costs, including maintenance, of St. Agnes' Church – at the time of writing this is about £145 **per day** – fall upon members of the congregation. We do not get any help from the government or from the Diocese of Liverpool to meet these costs. Thankfully there were grants available from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and others towards the cost of urgent repairs. In October 2015 we learned that we had been awarded a development grant of £17,300 by the HLF to allow us to investigate all the problems and draw up a repair proposal.

Before we could replace 27,000 life expired roof tiles or carry out any of the other urgent repairs we needed to thoroughly survey the building and carry out detailed investigations into the condition of the structure. We used some of the latest technology to do this; those who know the author know that he is a bit of a “gadget freak” and so rather enjoyed this phase of the project!



*Composite “point cloud” picture of St. Agnes' from above. (Russell Geomatics Ltd.)*

We engaged Russell Geomatics to carry out a 3D laser survey of the church in order to produce drawings accurate to 1mm in 100m – this process generated over five million measurement data in the form of a “point cloud” which can be “sliced” in any direction to produce sections, elevations, etc.; it could also be used to produce a 3D model of the church but to date we have resisted that temptation.

Included in the budget for this development phase was £1,350 for a cherry picker to be hired for half a day so we could get close to high level building elements to check for evidence of rotten timbers, dangerous loose stonework, etc. This figure turned out to be a reasonable estimate of the cost of the hire of machine and operator, but we had no idea that Liverpool City Council would want to charge us £4,800 to close Buckingham Avenue for a few hours. This wasn't in the budget and so the high level survey could not proceed in that form.

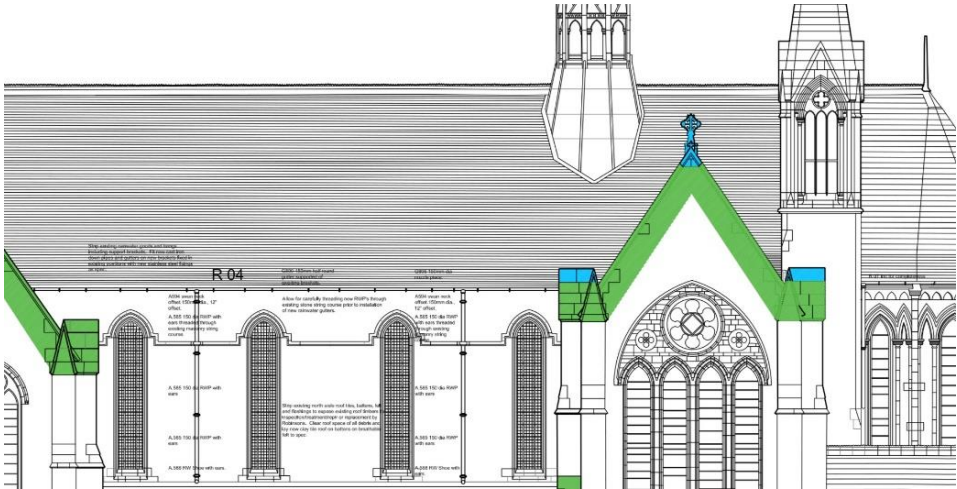
Help was at hand in the form of modern technology. Drones (or unmanned aerial vehicles) have acquired something of a sinister reputation thanks to their military uses and the ease with which they can fly contraband in to prisons. They do have honest, peaceful uses too and in April 2016 Fr. Christopher's driveway was turned into a temporary airport for Aerial Video TV's drone.



*The west end: UAV view of high-level stonework in poor condition and the tops of the three sections of the Great West Window. (Aerial Video TV).*

Not only did the drone give us some very high quality still and video footage of the otherwise inaccessible roof and high-level stonework, it also gave us some very useful “fly-through” footage of the church's interior, some of which we have used in the mobile phone app and other literature we have produced for visitors.

It was then the job of our Professional Lead, Chartered Surveyor Andrew Kepczyk of Lloyd Evans Prichard to produce all the drawings and specifications, aided by our Structural Engineer Fred Tandy; these were then given to our Quantity Surveyor Allison Kendal so she could prepare Bills of Quantity and the tender documentation.



Detail from a drawing of the S. elevation. (Andrew Kepczyk / Lloyd Evans Prichard).

Whilst Heritage Lottery Fund grants are not, strictly speaking, “state funding” they are a form of public money and so the purchase of any goods or services over £10,000 needs to be procured via a tendering exercise. The winning tenderer was Heritage Conservation & Restoration Ltd. (HCR) which had recently completed a repair project on the Grade II\* Listed church of St. Bridget with St. Thomas, Wavertree (our next-door parish) to a very high standard and so came with glowing references.

Before HCR could set up the site we had to remove two *Leylandii* trees which had been growing up next to the church for at least twenty years. One of these had completely obscured the attractive St. Agnes window which became visible again once it had gone.



HCR moved in on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017, and very soon the church disappeared behind the impressive scaffolding which was constructed to allow the work to be carried out safely. In line with insurance requirements and to keep out trespassers, the scaffolding was fitted with steel sheeting to a height of 5m – not a thing of beauty but it did the job.

A very good working relationship quickly developed between HCR, the church and the professional team, and the work, whilst not without its problems as is to be expected on a building of this age, progressed very well.

The repairs were completed just in time for the Licensing of Fr. Derek Lloyd as Vicar by the Bishops of Liverpool and Beverley on Thursday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

## EXTERIOR WORKS - BEFORE...



An example of the precarious condition of the stonework at the west (Ullet Road) end of the church. All the self-seeded *Buddleia* plants were seriously damaging the building by forcing mortar joints open, loosening stonework and allowing water in.



The poor condition of the roof and rainwater goods is evident from this 2015 view showing missing and slipped tiles, moss growth and a blocked gutter.

## ... DURING ...



Fred Tandy, our Structural Engineer, inspects the sandstone balustrade at the west end from the scaffolding. This was subsequently taken apart, repaired and reinstated.



Two of HCR's roofers applying a breathable geotextile membrane to a section of transept roof before retiling can take place.

## ... AND AFTER



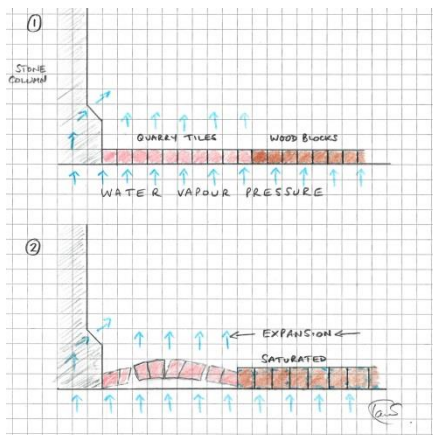
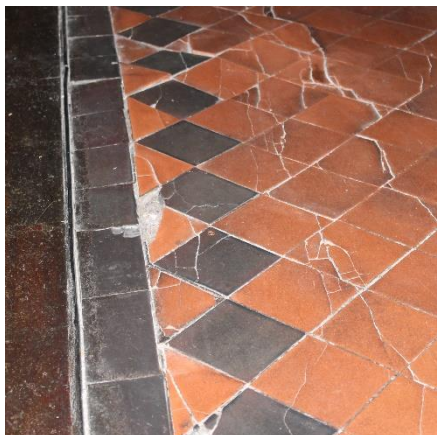
The west end: the balustrade has been repaired, the brickwork repointed in lime mortar and the vegetation cleared. Good for at least another 50 years!



The new roof appears as the scaffolding comes down. 27,000 new tiles were used in this project.

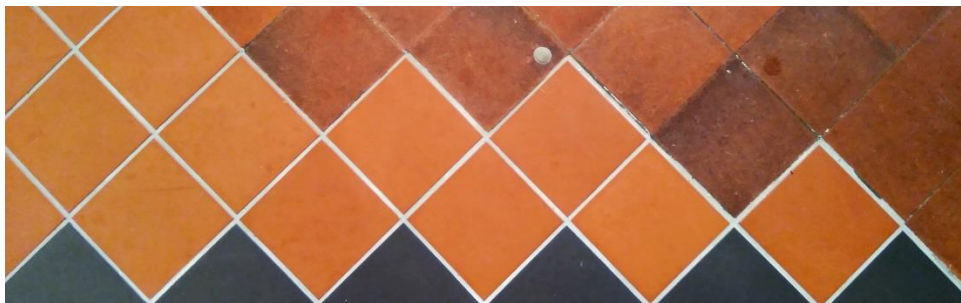
## THE TILED FLOOR

By 2015 the quarry tiled floors to the north and south aisles were in a poor state with cracked tiles and raised sections creating trip hazards, with particular risk to people with poor eyesight or who are unsteady on their feet.



Over time the varnished woodblock floor had absorbed water from the earth in the form of rising damp. This caused the blocks to swell and expand outwards, creating an almost irresistible pressure on the tiles, particularly where they came up against a stone column base and resulting in the type of damage shown above (*left*).

Whilst the bulk of the conservation work being carried out affected the exterior of the church, the project team felt it was important to make some improvements inside the building and the floor was treated as a priority. When the tiles were manufactured the imperial system was used; nowadays of course all measurements are in metric units and so the nearest matches for our tiles are a tiny bit smaller than the originals. The new tiles can be easily spotted as they have a wider band of grout around them (*below*). This is actually good conservation practice as it allows the work and materials of different periods to be identified easily.



## STRUCTURAL & ATMOSPHERIC MONITORING



As part of the 2017 project, the opportunity was taken to install a number of monitoring devices around the church in order to monitor structural movement and atmospheric conditions.

Cracking in the interior Caen stone walls has long been a problem at St. Agnes'. These examples (*left*) had been pointed-up some time ago using a grey cement mix – a completely inappropriate material for the job – but it was noticed in 2014 that some of the cracks were reopening.

The hard grey mortar was removed and the cracks were repointed in a more flexible lime-based mortar of the correct colour during 2017; at the same time several tell-tales were fixed to the wall to allow both the amount and direction of any structural movement over time to be measured and recorded. Information from the tell-tales will be used to decide whether any future remedial work is required.

Several electronic data recorders were placed at various locations; these were programmed to take readings of the temperature and air humidity at regular intervals throughout the day and night, over the course of a year. A lower-technology solution was adopted in order to ascertain humidity levels within the stonework: beech dowels were inserted into holes drilled into mortar joints. The outward-facing ends of the dowels were sealed with paint to prevent any moisture escaping so that we could be sure that the moisture absorbed by the wood accurately reflected conditions within the wall.

The data generated by the electronic recorders and beech dowels forms a considerable body of evidence which will be used to make informed decisions about the new heating system - which is urgently needed in order to keep the building dry and usable all year round, and which we hope to introduce in 2019 as part of the next phase of the conservation programme.

## PHASE ONE PROJECT SUMMARY

Total Project Value:	£344,000
Contract Start Date:	18 <sup>th</sup> March 2017
Contract End Date:	27 <sup>th</sup> September 2017
Project Manager:	Ian Simpson
Professional Lead:	Andrew Kepczyk, Lloyd Evans Pritchard Ltd.
Quantity Surveyor:	Allison Kendal, T. Sumner Smith & Partners
Structural Engineer:	Fred Tandy
Main Contractor:	Heritage Conservation Restoration Ltd.

### Principal Funders and Donors:



# LOTTERY FUNDED

The Allchurches Trust

The Wolfson Foundation

The Rainford Trust

The Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside's Benevolent Fund

The Listed Places of Worship Grants Scheme

Miss Susan Cook

## FUTURE REPAIR & CONSERVATION WORKS



One priority for the future mission and sustainability of St. Agnes's is the repair and internal redecoration of the Parish Hall: the photograph (*above, taken from the scaffolding during the 2017 repair project*) clearly shows the poor condition of the roof and clerestory windows. As any visitor to the hall will attest, the interior is in a most unattractive condition with added plasterwork and peeling paintwork thanks to water ingress, and the toilets are in desperate need of refurbishment.

Once this work is done, the hall can be restored to its rightful position at the centre of Parish life and we would also hope to hire it out for community events.

Ever since it was first opened, the church has had a reputation for being uncomfortably cold during the winter months and we are hoping to finally put this right with the installation of a new and efficient heating system.

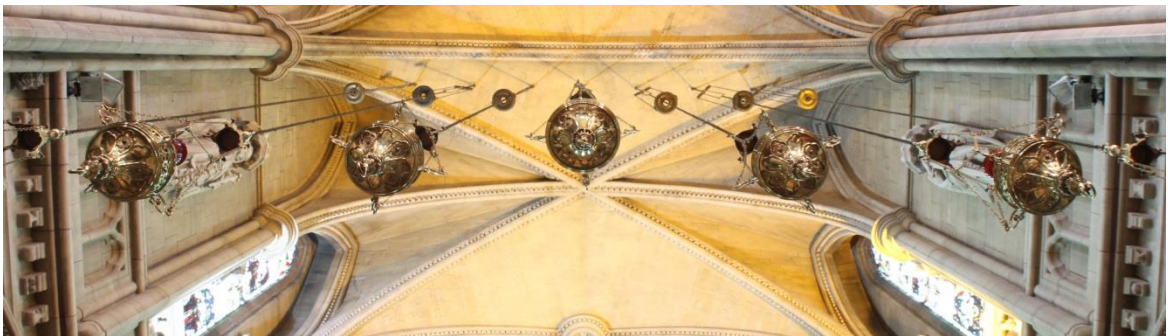
We also intend to carry out the repairs identified as necessary and urgent to the Great West Window.

We continue to face the future with optimism and we hope that many of the readers of this book will be inspired to come and spend time with us in the near future. Whether you join us for worship or for one of the special events we hold from time to time – or simply to visit the church and look around – you will always be assured of a warm welcome from the Church of St. Agnes & St. Pancras.

## NOTES & REFERENCES

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- (10) Simpson, Ian (2014) *St. Stephen's Church – A History in Four Acts*. Pamphlet written to commemorate the final Mass in the church, available via <http://www.iansimpson.eu/publications.html>.
- (11) <http://www.ship-of-fools.com/mystery/2001/293Mystery.html> accessed on 3rd October 2018.
- (12) A notable exception is Speke, All Saints, on the outskirts of Liverpool.
- (13) Rae, Mary (2004) *St. Agnes' Church, Ullet Road, Liverpool Jubilee 1885-1935*. Published for the Church.
- (14) Barlow, Adrian (n/d) *The Stained Glass of Charles Eamer Kempe*. Online: [http://www.adrianbarlow.co.uk/AEB/Kempe\\_article.html](http://www.adrianbarlow.co.uk/AEB/Kempe_article.html), accessed 16<sup>th</sup> June 2018.
- (15) *Ibid.*
- (16) Simpson, Ian (2015) *Church Buildings Inspection & Maintenance – an Introduction to the Essentials*. Liverpool, Boston Facilities Management.

“How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” *Gen. 28:17, RSV.*





## **SERVICE TIMES**

**PARISH MASS: SUNDAY at 10.00am**

Other Masses:

Wednesday at 10.00am

Thursday at 7.00pm

Friday at 12 noon

Plus Holy Days as advertised – please see our website

<http://www.stagnes.org.uk>

## **CHURCH OPEN**

Wednesdays and Fridays, 10.00am to 3.00pm

(April to October)

*Visitors welcome at other times by arrangement.*

**WE EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO ALL**



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