

FREE



Welcome
to
St Paul's Church

An Illustrated Self-Guided Tour

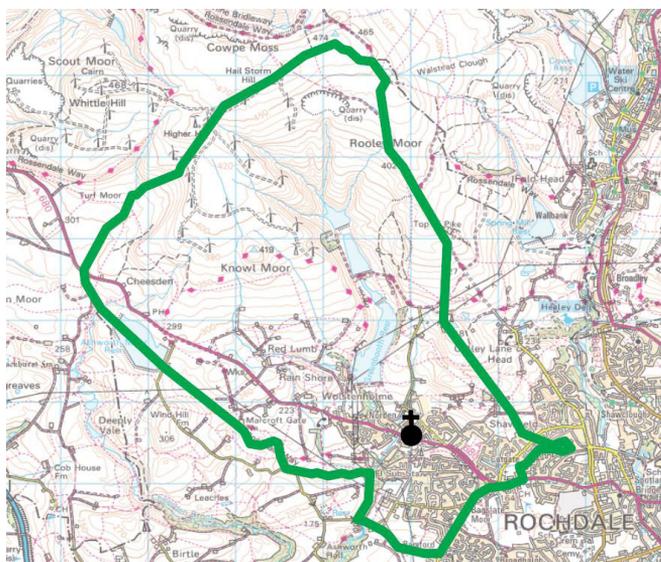
Welcome!

You are very welcome to St Paul's, Norden, where people have worshipped God for over 160 years, and still do, every week. We hope that this guide will help you to find out a bit more about our local village and lovely historic church.

Although St Paul's is still the Parish Church for Norden, since 2012 we have been part of the Church of England Benefice of St Paul's Norden, St James' Ashworth and St Michael's Bamford, sharing a vicar and our worship with our two sister churches.

The area that is now Norden has a colourful past, though it only started to be known by its modern name around the middle of the 19th Century. What is now our parish was part of 'the wastes of Spotland', and was a remote collection of hamlets: Wolstenholme, Bagslate, Greenbooth and Chadwick.

There was a much smaller and poorer population than today, most of them working in the many textile mills and mines that dotted the moorland landscape. The nearest church was St Clement's, Spotland, some 2 miles away.



St Paul's Norden Parish Boundary

Building the church

The church, which is a Grade II listed building in Gothic Revival style, was planned and built in Victorian times between 1859 and 1861 under the supervision of a Building Committee. The land cost £300 and was bought from John Heap, a Fulling Miller and owner of the nearby Shepherd Mill.



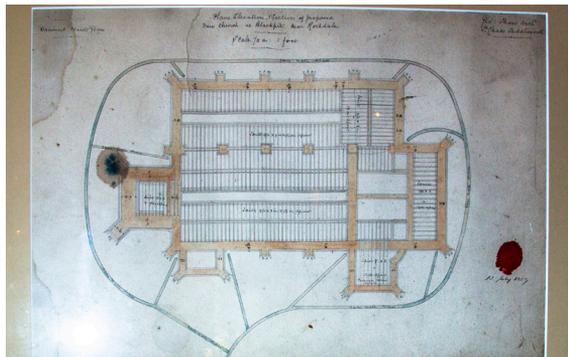
Original architect's drawings

The estimated cost of the building and fittings was £2,780. The money (about £390,000 at 2020 prices) was raised by donations from the public. The architect appointed for the new church was George Shaw of St



The ceremonial Trowel, presented to Mrs Rawstron when the foundation stone was laid.

Chad's, Saddleworth and the foundation stone was laid by Mrs Elizabeth Rawstron of Norden House at a ceremony held on 30th June 1859. Mrs Rawstron was the wife of Thomas Rawstron, a Building Committee member and owner of Black Pits Mill (Cotton Spinners & Manufacturers) located just south of the church on the other side of Edenfield Road.





A view from the churchyard

He had built Norden House (opposite the church) in the 1850s. It was demolished in the 1960s to allow the building of new houses on Shepherd Street.

The church was not the only building to be erected in Norden at this time. A date stone above the door of the Norden Inn at the end of the terrace of houses between the church and the Brown Cow public house reads 'Norden Terrace 1860'.

After an argument, basically over who was to have the right to appoint the vicar, St Paul's Church, Norden was finally consecrated by the Lord Bishop of Manchester on 27th November 1861.

St Paul's is a living church, and is a central part of Norden village. There have been many restoration projects and additions to the church over the years, most recently the Heritage Lottery funded repair of the roof.

Thank you National Lottery players for helping us keep the rain out!

Find out more when you follow the numbered markers around the building.

Please begin at number 1, which is near the main entrance.

1. A National Scandal!

A wooden plaque on the back wall of the Nave displays a list of the vicars of the Parish. There was one "incumbent" before our first vicar, who is not listed on the plaque: Revd W Grant (1862-5). The second vicar listed, Revd Charles Henry Whitehead, became very unpopular. He was an inflexible Anglo-Catholic in what was then a very low church. The



Our Flower Festival would have been very unpopular back in 1868!

parishioners objected strongly to things that we would happily take for granted today, like flowers or candles on the communion table.

The vicar was soon involved in “a series of unseemly squabbles” with them, leading to a case in the Rochdale Magistrates’ court on 27th May 1868, when Revd Whitehead prosecuted a churchwarden (another Mr Rawstron), who he accused of disrupting a service by forcibly removing a vase of flowers from the altar.

Later the Bishop of Manchester was asked to step in and sort out the vicar’s neglect of his duties, and the story appeared in the local and national press.

2. Baptistry

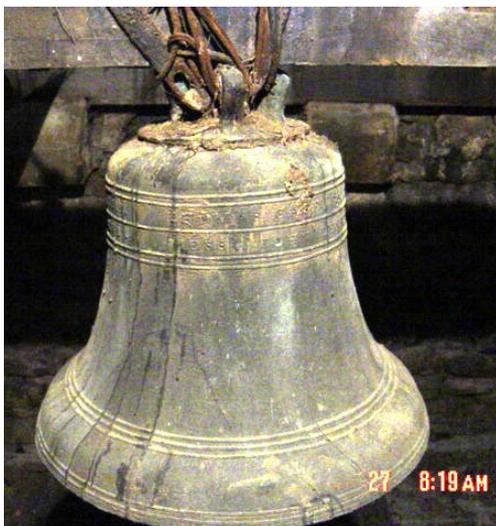
Around the corner, in front of the toilet, is an octagonal stone font in the Gothic style for use at baptisms - so this part of the church is called the Baptistry. The font was presented by the Coroner of South Lancashire, Thomas Fferrand Dearden and his wife Emma, in memory of their infant daughter Judith Ann who died in 1837. Thomas took an active part in the building of the church



The font has a more recent wooden cover, given in memory of Mary, youngest daughter of our third vicar Rev Richard Wright Willett. Sadly, young Mary died in 1915 aged just 13 years.

A smaller portable wooden font at the front of church is now used to baptise people.

You are standing directly below the church tower and spire. A bell rope hangs beside the stone font and is used to toll the church bell before services. Inside the tower above you is a single bell, which is hidden from view. It's older than St Paul's



The bell



church itself and came from St John's in Liverpool, which was demolished in 1899.

On the wall nearby is a plaque and photograph of the weather vane, a recent addition that now adorns the top of the spire.

On the walls of the Baptistry are three original watercolour scale drawings of the plan and elevations of the church from 1859. There are also four churchwarden's staves which are used on ceremonial occasions.

North Aisle

Leave the Baptistry and head towards the 'kitchen', installed in the North Aisle in 2019 to serve refreshments after services. On your left is



3. Choir Vestry

At the end of the North Aisle is an oak screen which was moved sideways from its original position in front of the choir pews and Chancel so as to open up the church. It was given in memory of Richard Willett, the vicar's son, who fell in Flanders in 1917. It is one of two war memorials in the church building.

Open the double doors in the screen and enter the Choir Vestry, a 'back office' area where members of the choir don their robes before services. You will find the

a small stained glass window. It is an original feature, now sadly faded, containing the names of the members of the Church Building Committee.

Turning right at the kitchen, space has been created in the North Aisle for social events and a children's play area by removing some pews.

Please be careful as the floor is a bit wonky in places!

The big oak chest by the wall is where we keep the beautiful 'frontals' that decorate the altar. The colour of the hangings change during the year - green in 'ordinary time'; purple for Lent and Advent; red for Remembrance and martyrs; and white & gold for the great festivals of Christmas and Easter.



heavy brass processional cross, donated in 2003 in memory of Norman Jones, chorister and Reader. The cross is used at the beginning and end of most Sunday services.

On the wall are displayed old photographs and newspaper cuttings.

4. The Eagle

Leaving the Choir Vestry through the double doors, turn left and stop to admire the impressive brass Eagle

Lectern from which the Bible is read during services.

It was a gift from the parishioners at the fiftieth anniversary in 1911. Then turn left up the steps into the Chancel.

5. War Memorial

A wooden memorial plaque is fixed to the wall of the Chancel naming the seventy nine men killed in the First World War, a huge loss for such a small community.



After the Second World War the plaque was extended to include a further fifteen names. The full Roll of Honour is read out at the Act of Remembrance that is held at the village War Memorial each November.

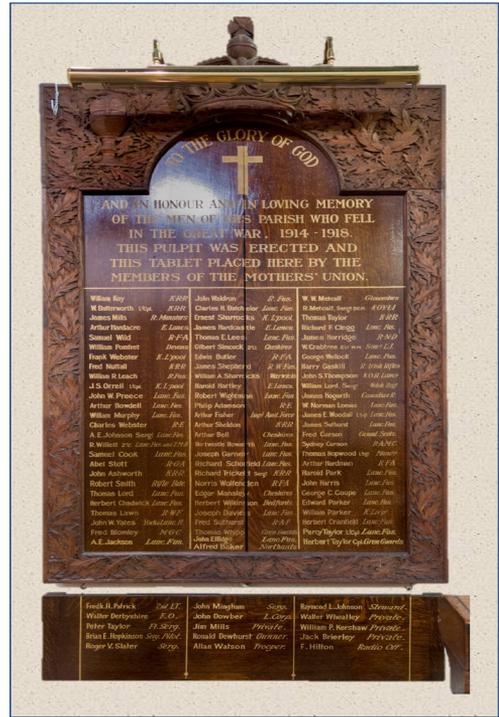
Just one of the men named is buried in our churchyard - Private Jim Mills.

Beside the War Memorial is the wooden pulpit, which is still sometimes used for sermons. It was presented by the Mothers Union at the same time as the War Memorial.

In the archway, across the choir pews and at the opposite side of the Chancel, is an Allen electronic organ, installed in 2008 to replace the much-loved old pipe organ, which had finally worn out.

6. East Window

At the eastern end of the church is its most attractive feature, a large stained glass window which is stunning when the morning sun shines



through it. The photo on the front cover gives you an idea of its splendour, if you're unfortunate enough to visit on a cloudy day!

The window was installed in 1928 in "affectionate memory" of the former vicar Rev. Willett. It depicts the Paschal Lamb surrounded by a host of cherubim praising God, with angels, some playing gold instruments. Night and day complete the design, represented by sun, moon and stars.



The Reredos

Altar and Sanctuary

At the base of the East Window is a wooden reredos (an ornamental screen) made in 1931 with a painting of Jesus in the centre inscribed “come unto me”, and kneeling angels on both side panels.



The Bishop's throne

In front of the reredos is the Communion table (altar) used during services.

There are two large brass candlesticks on the altar, which the

congregation would no doubt have strongly disapproved of in the 19th Century during Rev. Whitehead's ministry!



Nearby on the left is a carved oak throne used by the Bishop when a new priest is installed and at confirmation services.

7. Alice Diggle

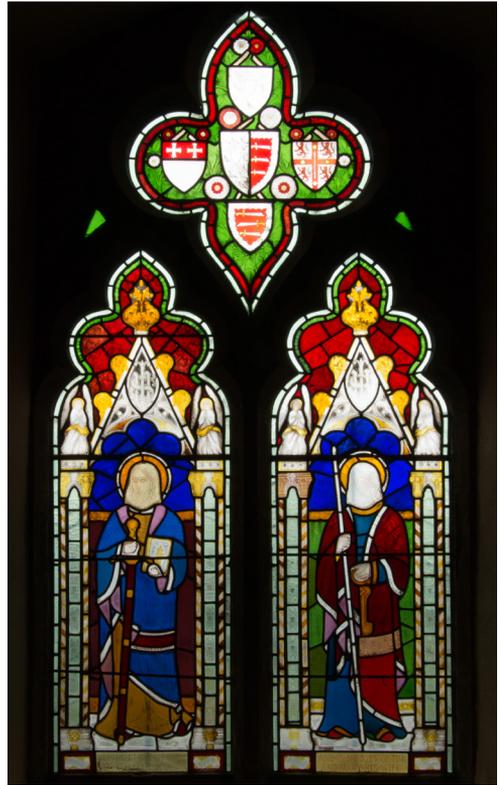
Return to the Chancel steps and enter the Nave where the congregation sits during services. To the right is a brass plaque on a pillar near where Alice Diggle used to sit. She was born before the battle of Waterloo and lived to be over one hundred years old.

8. Saint Peter and Saint Paul

The stained glass window in the centre of the south wall dates back to the construction of the church.

Saint Peter (with key) and Saint Paul (with sword) appear in the window along with five heraldic shields.

You have now reached the end of the tour, but read on to find out more about the central role that St Paul's plays in the life and history of Norden.



St Peter and St Paul

Church Registers

St Paul's has been a special place, important in the lives of local people for over 160 years. Here are just a few of them: the first entries in the Church Registers.

The official church registers are a valuable historical record, used by local

historians and people wanting to research their family trees.

The first baptism register entry is that of Mary Ellen Oddie, the daughter of John and Mary Oddie of Peel Street, Spotland dated 7th September 1862. Mary Ellen was born on 12 July 1862 and her father was a Weaver by trade.

The first register entry for marriage is that of John Lord, a Fulling Miller from Rainshore to Maria Lord, a Weaver from Lane Side, on 13th August 1862. John's father James Lord was also a Fulling Miller and Maria's father another John Lord was a Cotton Spinner. The marriage took place after banns were read.

The first burial register entry is dated 21st January 1863 and is for the burial of Elizabeth Brooks of Greenbooth - the hamlet drowned beneath the local reservoir of the same name in 1961 - who died aged 21 years.



The grave of Thomas Fferrand Dearden

The Churchyard

If time permits, the Churchyard is well worth a visit. Please be careful as some of the paths are uneven and there is a risk of tripping.

Located below the large East Window is the old and distinctively shaped grave of Thomas Fferrand Dearden (see 2 above), who died in 1870 aged 68 years, and his wife Emma who died later that same year aged 71 years.

In the upper part of the Churchyard there is a Commonwealth War Grave belonging to Jim Mills, 2/6 Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers, of 12 Clapgate Road, Norden who died aged 21 on 15th July

1940. Look out for his white headstone and the white cross at the right angled bend of one of the footpaths.

One of the oldest graves (the third entry in the Register of Burials), belongs to John Heap (see Building the



John & Mary Heap of Shepherd Mill

Church section above) who owned Shepherd Mill (now demolished). He died in 1863 aged 58 years and is buried along with his wife Mary (who died in 1864 aged 62 years), their son William Edward (who died in 1887 aged 57 years) and William's wife Isabella Martha (who died in 1928 aged 83 years). This vault is located at the top Western end of the churchyard surrounded by iron railings which have now fallen into disrepair and there is also a large sycamore tree growing through the grave.

Another interesting grave is that of Betty Ashworth – the famous landlady of the Hare and Hounds Inn on Ashworth Moor.

Elizabeth (Betty) Ramsbottom married John Ashworth in

Rochdale on 24th October 1839 and they ran the Hare and Hounds Inn together until John's death in 1866 at the age of 49. Betty continued to run the Inn after John's death until the 1880s. Betty died in 1893 aged 74 years. The Inn became known as 'Owd Betts' to locals but the name wasn't officially changed until the 1950s. Also buried in this grave is one of their daughters, Elizabeth, who died in 1932 aged 74 years.



Owd Betts grave

There are a variety of headstones in the churchyard some of which are just simple grave markers only showing the initials of the person interred together with the grave number. In some cases these little marker stones do show the full name of the buried person, but not often.



Here's grave marker 225 for Henry Pickover of 24 Industry Street, Norden who died in 1900 aged 44 years.



Grave 185 marker for Robert William Coupe Price of Norden who died in 1876 aged 2 years... sadly, having the unfortunate lad's full name on his gravestone was evidently a luxury his family couldn't afford.



Grave 165 marker for John Rooney of Norden who died in 1893 aged 36 years.



The churchyard in Spring

We are doing our bit at St Paul's to encourage biodiversity by managing the churchyard more sustainably. That means letting some of the grass grow to help wild flowers, bees and butterflies, and leaving some dead wood for insects. We're sorry if that means the churchyard is less tidy than some would like to see it, but nature needs all the help we can give it. A wildlife sanctuary in the upper Churchyard beyond the graves is planned for the near future.

We are proud to have achieved a Bronze Eco-church award.



The Vicarage

The vicarage originally associated with St Paul's was built in 1900-1901 and is located to the North of the church, at the top of Heap Road. Reverend Richard Wright Willett (1895 – 1924), was the first resident. The 1911 Census entry shows him living there with his wife of 24 years, Mary, and eight out of their nine children.

All the Vicars of St Paul's lived there until 2012, when the parish joined with St Michael's Bamford. The vicarage became a private residence in 2013.

The Parish Hall

Before St Paul's was built, a church sponsored school for the local children was established in 1847. It closed its doors in 1959 and is used to this day as the Parish Hall. It is the stone building on the left down Black Pits Road (downhill from church, on the other side of Edenfield Road), which is also the location of the church car park.

More information

To learn more about the history of Norden and St Paul's please refer to a book called *The Very Outer Boundary of Civilisation* by Ernest Price, a former Reader of this church. Copies are available in church.

For a list of contacts, groups and church news please visit our website, rochdalenorthwest.org.



Thank you for visiting St Paul's,
we hope to see you again soon.

Please consider entering your details in
the red visitor's book at the back of church
near the main entrance.

If you have enjoyed your visit and would
like to help maintain the church there is a
plate for donations, or you can scan here to
go to our JustGiving page. Thank you.

It costs almost £1000 a week
just to run St Paul's and we rely exclusively
on voluntary contributions.



This guide was created with the support of
The Heritage Lottery Fund

Compiled and edited 2022 by
Ian Short (PCC Secretary)
Andrew Mawson (Churchwarden)
Christopher Verey (Parishioner and local historian)

Includes material from
The Very Outer Boundary of Civilisation
by Ernest Price
published Oct 1986 by St Paul's Norden PCC

© St Paul's Norden Parochial Church Council 2022
rochdalenorthwest.org/st-pauls