Baptistry

The Baptistry was created in memory of the second Rector, Edward Gregg (1883-1915). The area is now used by the choir for robing and assembly, but it still contains a Font, made of Caen stone. From 1954 it was the "Children's Corner" and was carpeted with part of the blue carpet used at the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II at Westminster Abbey.

Wolfe Memorial Corner

This is at the south-west corner of the church, which has been cleared of pews, etc. to form an open area for fellowship and refreshments. Along the wall are old photographs of the church and parish, and a picture gallery of past rectors.

Paintings

On the South wall is hung "The Adoration of the Magi" by Tom Mostyn. In St. James Chapel is "Christ In The Wilderness", also by Tom Mostyn. It was presented by Mr. C. Luxmoore in 1926 and is so large that the frame had to be made in the chapel itself.

Carpet

A handmade carpet was specially designed for the Sanctuary steps and was made by Mrs. M. Sheppard in 1885, at which time she was almost 80 years old. Although it has faded somewhat it shows little sign of wear after well over a century of use.

Memorials

Among the more notable are those to Rev. William Scoresby, a famous Arctic explorer; Henry Forbes Julian, lost in the 1912 'Titanic' disaster; Lt. Philip L.C. Phillips who died of dysentery in Ceylon in 1858; and his father Philip L. Phillips, M.D., of Torquay and Barbados, who died in 1869.

We trust that you have enjoyed your visit to our church, and have found spiritual refreshment here. If you require any further information or help, the Rector can be found at Upton Rectory, Furzehill Road, Torquay (Tel: 211572)

The Parish Church of St. Mary Magdalene Upton, Torquay

A BRIEF HISTORY AND GUIDE



1993

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Origins

In January 1843 a Public Meeting proposed that a new church be built on "the rocky platform to the North-West of Morgan's Horticultural Establishment", in which all the seats be free to all the inhabitants of the parish. Anthony Salvin, who had restored Windsor Castle and the Tower of London, designed this church and the foundation stone was laid on 9th April 1844 (a glass case containing 10/4d in coins within). The church is built of limestone from the local Barton quarry, dressed with Caen stone. Because of the narrowness of the rocky platform it could not face due east, so there is a marked deviation southwards. The church was consecrated on 12th April 1849, dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene. Prebendary Richard Wolfe, M.A., was the first Rector, remaining in this post until 1883.

Tower and Spire

Because of lack of funds the tower and spire were not completed until late-1854, with the aid of donations obtained by making them the town's memorial to the national hero, the Duke of Wellington, who had died in 1852. The height of the spire is 165 feet (50.3 metres) and it is topped by a gilded weathercock designed by Pugin. A peal of eight bells first rang on Christmas Day 1855, and a clock was added in November 1862.

Dimensions

The length of the Nave and Chancel is 120ft (36.6m), the breadth 60ft (18.3m) and the height 70ft (21.3m). The great height resulted from the requirement that the design should allow a gallery if found necessary.

West Windows

The two windows above the entrance were filled with coloured glass by Alfred Sheppard in 1864.
The round window above was the gift of William Wailes of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, whose stained-glass works supplied cathedrals all over the world, including Ely.

Nave

The open timber roof is somewhat reminiscent of a mediaeval Great Hall. The corbels supporting the principals of the roof end in carved heads of crowned ancient queens, all crudely done and some quite grotesque. Possibly they were never finished.

Chancel and Sanctuary

When the present organ was installed in 1881 a comprehensive plan for beautification of the East end of the church was drawn up by Gilbert G. Scott, involving new Chancel windows, a Chancel screen of Ashburton marble, a screen (in Caen stone) behind the choir stalls, a handsome Organ screen, a reredos, and marble paving and wall lining. Most of this work was completed by 1889, supervised by Temple Moore after Gilbert Scott's death, but the upper part of the rerdos, built of Caen stone, was not completed until 1906. A Bishop's Seat of Petitor marble was also provided.
The alabaster figures on the lower reredos present three scenes in the life of Mary Magdalene: Our Lord's appearance in the garden; the washing of His feet with her hair; and at the foot of the cross, with St. Mary and St. John.
The upper reredos shows the Risen Christ in company with David, Daniel, Moses and Elisha. At the sides, in canopied niches, are St. Peter and St. Paul.
Further canopied figures in the Apse are Saints Iranaeus, Polycarp, Chrysostom, Clement, Ambrose and Jerome.
Carvings on the screens represent the emblems of the Passion of Our Lord; emblems of the four evangelists; scriptural scenes and allegorical figures.
The dais above the Chancel steps is a recent installation, to provide facility for more flexible use in new forms of worship and for more efficient public-address equipment.

Pulpit

Designed by Temple Moore, the lower section is of marble, the upper of Caen stone. The five niches contain figures of St. Mary Magdalene and the four evangelists. On either side of the preacher are St. Paul and St. John the Baptist.

Lectern

This is a brass copy of a mediaeval one, and cost 70 guineas.

Rector's Stall

Being made by Robert Thompson of Kilburn, Yorkshire, the celebrated "Mouseman", his signature appears in the shape of a little mouse.

St. James' Chapel

This is named after a Mission House in St. James Road, which became Parish Church of a new St. James, Upton, parish in 1910. After re-incorporation into Upton parish the church became redundant and the building became first a Youth Centre and is now part of St. James C of E Primary School.