

The Millennium Window

The window was commissioned by the church to mark the Millennium and depicts St Barnabas, 'Son of Encouragement'. The members were very grateful to Nicholas Mynheer for his willingness to envision, design and produce the new window.



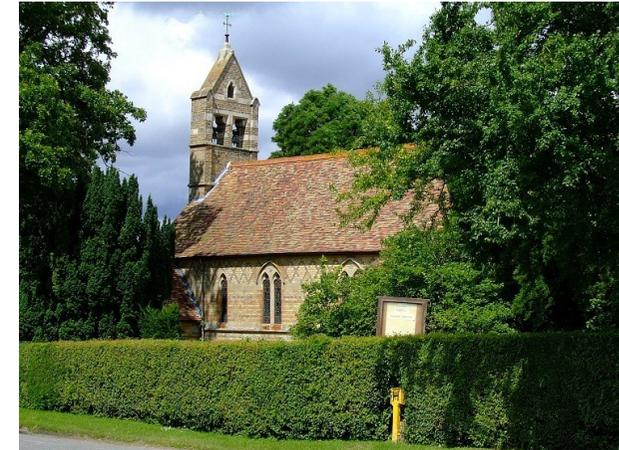
St Barnabas is seen in the centre panel, comforting and encouraging the seated figure who might well be Christ at Gethsemane, or indeed us. Or, perhaps he is presenting Saul to the disciples, encouraging both Saul as well as the disciples to accept God's Will.

Barnabas looks directly at us, engaging us. By helping the seated figure he acts as Christ himself, reminding us of the words "Christ has no hands but yours...". We are encouraged by Barnabas to do as he does, to become more Christ-like, remembering what Our Lord said, "what you did for the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me". And so, in a sense, we see Christ as Barnabas, Barnabas as Christ, as we too act for, and as, Christ in our dealings.

To the left of the main panel Barnabas is seen taking The Faith to Cyprus, symbolised by the Chalice. The boat symbolises his mission and the mission of the Church. On the right of the main panel we see the washing of feet and the breaking of bread. Once again it is not clear which figure is Christ and this is the point – Christ can be seen in all these figures, as can St Barnabas, and indeed ourselves. The symbol of the bread balances that of the Chalice representing the Eucharist.

Above all, in the top crescent, is The Holy Ghost, symbolised by the Dove, the bird of peace, carrying an olive branch. Feathers, like the flames of Pentecost, are shed over and around the whole panel and come together in the lower crescent to form the lettering A.D.2000.'

St Barnabas Church Horton-cum-Studley



St Barnabas, Horton-cum-Studley, is part of a 4-parish benefice and shares a vicar with Beckley, Stanton St John and Forest Hill

The Church Building

In the 1860s, St Barnabas Church was designed by William Butterfield (1814-1900), the famous Victorian architect, who also designed Keble College, Oxford.

Butterfield, one of the leading proponents of the Gothic revival in this country, was a High Churchman who devoted most of his career to designing churches, including All Saints, Margaret Street in London, and cathedrals in South Africa, India and Australia.

In 1867, whilst Keble College was being built, Butterfield became interested in the proposal to build a new church in Horton-cum-Studley, to replace the chapel at Studley Priory which had been used by villagers for worship since the reformation. The money for the new church, as well as the vicarage and a school (which used to be beyond the north wall of the churchyard) was donated by the Cooke family of Beckley, who, for several generations, were vicars there. In the window near the door, on the right as you face the altar is a picture of the founder, others include portraits of his daughters.

St Barnabas church consists of a chancel, nave, north aisle and west belfry. One of its most striking features is the colour of the brickwork, which is faded yellow banded with red and dark blue. The diaper pattern under the eaves is characteristic of Butterfield. The bricks which were used were hand-made locally. The fittings, including the font and reredos behind the high altar, were also designed by Butterfield. The stained glass is by Frederick Preedy and A. Gibbs, and the organ was built in recent years, in its position in the north arcade by Gordon Curtis (q.v.) During the Millennium year a new window, designed by the local Christian artist, Nicholas Mynheer, was installed at the east end of the north aisle.

St Barnabas is not the first church on this site, and the carved capitals in the garden of the Old Vicarage at the top of the village on the Brill Road, are probably all that remains of the previous church building. It is probable that the original dedication of the church was to St. Mary, as Studley Priory (now a private house) came to be later. Shortly after the Dissolution of the monasteries, Studley Priory was bought by a Mr. Croke. His grandson, nearly forty years later, converted it into a dwelling. Almost a hundred years after the nuns had left the Priory, Sir John Croke added a private chapel to his mansion. Although this was partly for the benefit of the alms houses that he had just built, other villagers were allowed to attend. The effect of this was to hasten the decline of the Horton church. Eventually it was taken out of use and by the end of the seventeenth century had collapsed into rubble.

The chair to the right of the altar, with a crown carved in its back, is the one which Charles I used when he dined at Studley Priory before the Battle of Boarstall, and was given to the church by Captain John Henderson, whose family bought the Priory just after the church was completed.

Captain Henderson's only daughter, Hilda, who became a nun in 1921, painted the War Memorial of the Great War, which is on the inside of the south wall of the church. It is unique and the men can be recognised from their painted portraits.

The Organ

Fifty years ago the congregation celebrating Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation in St Barnabas Church would have sung hymns to a very different organ sound to that to which they celebrated her Golden Jubilee.

The first organ in the church was built in 1881 by the firm of Bryceson Bros. & Ellis and stood where the vestry is now.

The instrument was not new when brought to the church, having been built for a house in Eastbourne. The original address label is preserved on one of the present pedal pipes. It is not known when this organ was obtained but it was some time before 1918 as the late Maggie Jones remembered playing her first service on it on Armistice Day.

By the late 1970s this instrument was in need of repair. It had suffered the wear and tear of nearly a hundred years of use and, as it was poorly sited and voiced for a house rather than a church, the decision was taken to replace it and place the new organ in the north aisle, restoring the vestry to its original site.

The cost of a new organ was prohibitive and so attempts were made to find a second-hand instrument of suitable size. Eventually it was decided to buy a derelict instrument from Nettlebed Church for £200 and, under direction of Richard Vendome, to build the present organ using parts of the old Bryceson organ, the Nettlebed organ and some new pipework. A condition of the sale of the Nettlebed organ was that it be removed immediately and so a team of parishioners, led by Gordon Curtis, hired a van and spent all of a Saturday, much of Sunday and some of Monday clearing the gallery of the organ and transporting it to Horton.

The new instrument was designed by Richard Vendome in the style of the 16th century Italian master Antegnati. Most of the action was salvaged from the Nettlebed organ whilst the old Bryceson instrument supplied much of the pipework. The new pipework, made by Fratelli Denti of Crema, Italy, was designed to fit in with the old to provide the characteristic Italian sound. This was enhanced by the gift from an Italian organ builder, Sr. Tamburini, of a rank of wooden pipes, dating from the early 19th century and made by the firm Sarassi. These form the Bourdon stop on the upper keyboard and some can be seen in the case. Building went on for a number of years, work being mostly confined to weekday evenings and dependent on volunteers. Many parishioners discovered talents they didn't know they possessed and much work was done by people outside the church congregation.

The organ was eventually opened in September 1985 with a recital by James Dalton, organist of the Queen's College. Since that time a few tonal alterations have been made in the light of experience and the carving of the case carried out by John Bye.

(Gordon Curtis 2002)