

# Little St. Mary's CAMBRIDGE







## Introduction



The church of Little St. Mary's, properly Our Lady of Grace, was dedicated on 3rd November 1352 by the Bishop of Ely. It replaced the former Norman church, started about 1140, which was called St. Peter at Trumpington Gate, and which was then outside the town boundary; it remained in private patronage until about 1206. In that year the parish church, together with its endowments and land, was given to the Hospital of St. John (now St. John's College) and the church was served until 1284 by chaplains from that foundation. In 1284 Hugh de Balsham, Bishop of Ely, transferred the church and its endowments to his new foundation of Peterhouse, and the substantial wealth of St. Peter's was the prime endowment of the new college, which also took its name from the parish church.

The church was used as a college chapel and parish church until 1348 when it became ruinous, and the college rebuilt it as a five-bayed college chapel, with a small building at the west end which served the parishioners. In 1450 the westernmost bay was added and a screen was put up to indicate the division at that point between the college chapel and the parish church. The doors from that screen are now hung at the entrance to the south porch. The rest of the screen was taken down in 1741 when the church was refitted, and the pulpit and the Holy Table (now at the west end) both date from that time. In 1632 Peterhouse decided to build another chapel in the college, and the building then reverted to being a parish church again.

Ancient stairs still lead directly into the college, and the remains of three chantry chapels in the church all commemorate Masters of Peterhouse—the Lane Chantry on the north side, the Horneby Chantry on the south side, and the Warkworth Chantry (now the Sacristy).

Little St. Mary's has been a place where people have found God ever since the twelfth century. It is not a museum, for it remains a place for prayer and worship, and when in use at the High Mass on Sunday mornings, conveys to many people a powerful sense of the Presence of God. We invite you to attend this worship and thus to join that long trail of pilgrims who, over eight centuries, have discovered that there is indeed here a ladder set up between earth and heaven.

James Owen

*The Limoges enamels on this page are to be seen on the Mendel Processional Cross which is described elsewhere in this handbook.*





This general view of the church shows its simplicity of design. It was designed in 1348–52 as a college chapel for Peterhouse, possibly by Alan of Walsingham, whose Lady Chapel windows at Ely Cathedral are identical in design with those here. Originally of five bays (the sixth and western bay was added about 1450) it was a hall-church, for preaching especially, and in the tradition of the European hall churches of the Religious Orders of the Middle Ages. There are no pillars, side aisles or transepts to obscure sound or vision. The

building remains today ideal for preaching and for worship for these reasons. Above the arch into the Lady Chapel can be seen the Royal Arms of King George II, given to the church by a German painter, Valentine Ritz, who also painted Sir Isaac Newton. Ritz was buried in Little St. Mary's Churchyard in 1743.

**The Pulpit** of 1741 incorporates in its sounding board a considerable amount of mahogany inlaid work, and is an early example of such usage.





The entrance to the Lady Chapel shows the fine carving (c. 1530) over the former Horneby Chantry. The Lady Chapel was added in 1931 and was designed in the Neo-Classical style by Thomas Lyon, a Fellow of Corpus Christi College, who

also designed the Chapel of Sidney Sussex College. The statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary was the gift of the Reverend Geoffrey Clayton Vicar of Little St. Mary's and later Archbishop of Cape Town.





**The High Altar** seen here was installed in 1913 by Sir Ninian Comper. It is an 'English Altar' (based on medieval English design) and the cross was given in memory of Bishop Hicks of Bloemfontein (Vicar of Little St. Mary's in the late nineteenth century). The candlesticks are based on a set in the possession of Peterhouse.

The whole scheme was a memorial to John Willis Clark, Registry of the

University and Fellow of Trinity College, and Francisca his wife. Their coat of arms, and others, appear in the lower part of the east window, which is also the work of Comper. The rest of the window is by the great Victorian glass painter, Kempe, as is the west window, and also the north-east window.





**The Organ** (1978) was dedicated by Bishop Michael Ramsey in that year, and was designed by Bishops, of Ipswich. It has seventeen stops, and is a fine example of a classical mid-nineteenth-century English organ. The case was designed by Laurence Bond, F.R.I.B.A., and the cost

of the instrument was defrayed by the Peck Trust, whose funds were bequeathed by Arthur Peck, a Fellow of Christ's College, who died in 1974, leaving considerable sums for the up-keep and maintenance of the church.



**The Crypt**, restored in 1961, was originally a store room for Peterhouse, and dates from the fourteenth century. It was later used as a bone-hole or ossuary, but is now used for small services. The stone used is largely clunch, the soft chalk-like stone from which

many Cambridge colleges were originally built. The floor slab, to Mary Vickers and others, has lettering by Mark Bury, A.F.G.E., of Oakington, whose fine lettering is to be seen in many public buildings, including St. Paul's Cathedral.



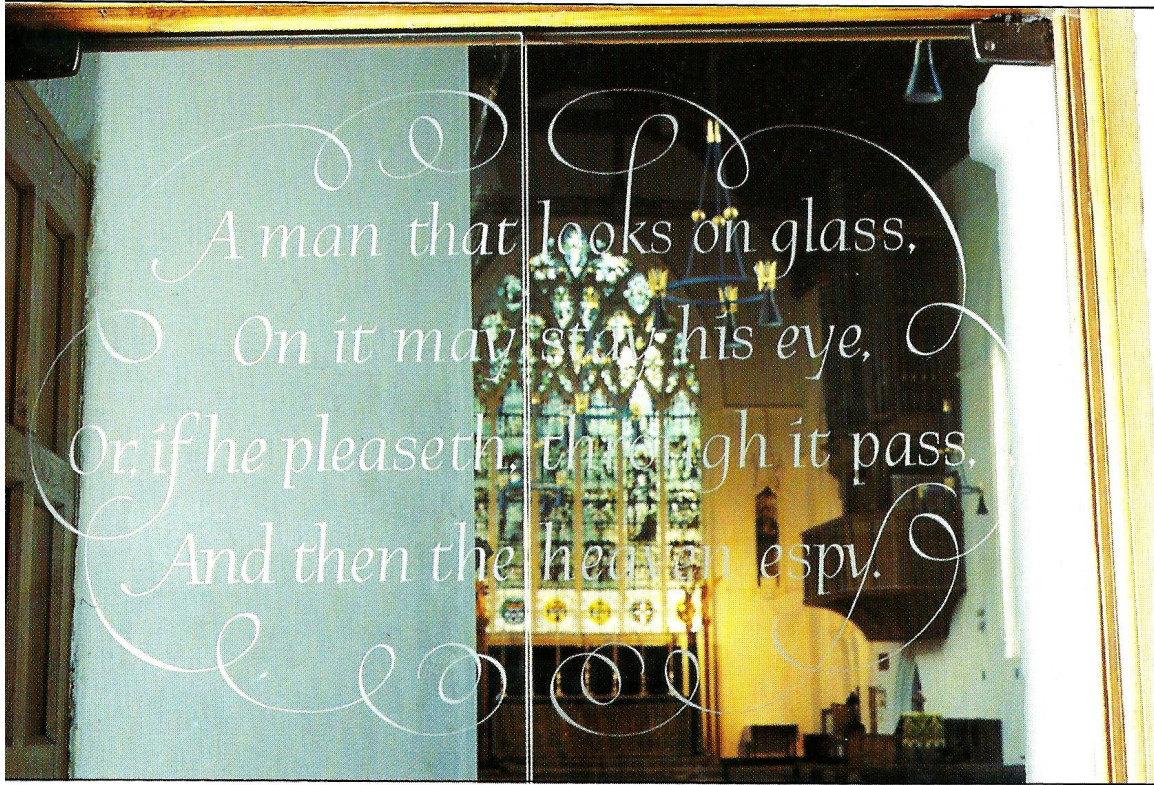




**The west end of the church** includes the font (c. 1450) behind which is the reredos of 1876 by Scott. The font cover contains carved work dated 1632, with the initials of the churchwardens of the day. On the right can be seen the Norman arch

(c. 1150) which is the largest remaining structure from the original Church of St. Peter at Trumpington Gate. The Washington Monument is on the right hand side of the door.





**The west doors** Dedicated by Bishop Michael Ramsey in 1981, these doors were engraved by Mark Bury, A.F.G.E., of Oakington. The poetry of George Herbert (one time public orator of the university) is especially appropriate, as Richard Crashaw, also a metaphysical poet, was a priest at Little St. Mary's from 1638 to 1643. The doors were the gift of four members of the congregation.

**The Washington Monument** (opposite) This commemorates the Reverend Godfrey Washington, a great uncle of George Washington, and Vicar of Little St. Mary's, and Fellow of Peterhouse.

The Stars and Stripes may be seen on the coat of arms, together with the crest of an eagle. The Washington City coat of arms is identical, and the national flag of the U.S.A. is thought to be based upon this achievement. The church was on the Bicentennial Trail around England in 1976.





Near this Place lyeth the Body of  
the Late Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> GODFREY  
WASHINGTON of the *County*  
of *York*. Minister of this Church  
and *Fellow* of S<sup>t</sup> Peter's Colledge  
Born July the 26<sup>th</sup> 1670.  
and Dyed the 28<sup>th</sup> day of Sep<sup>r</sup>

1729.







**The Mendel Cross** (opposite) Made in 1951 to designs by Sir Ninian Comper, the cross is of gilded bronze, and has fine Limoges enamels of the Four Evangelists and of four other saints. It was first shown at Lambeth Palace as part of a Festival of Britain exhibition of English church art. Given in 1985 by the Reverend Tom Mendel (Chaplain of Downing College) and Fiona his wife, the cross was first used at the visit of Cardinal Godfried Danneels, Primate of Belgium, in 1985.

**The Dewey Aumbry** Given by friends of the Reverend Meredith Dewey, Dean of Pembroke College and Honorary Priest of Little St. Mary's from 1936 to 1983, the aumbry is made of walnut, and carved with a Pelican in its Piety. It was designed by Laurence Bond, F.R.I.B.A., and dedicated by the Bishop of Leicester, a former member of Pembroke College, in 1985.



**The Barnard Thurible** Made in about 1600, in Eastern Europe, the thurible is constructed as a hexagonal castle: the carrying chains run through silver turrets at three points. The thurible was given by her family to remember the life of Violet Barnard.





**The Paton Incense Boat** Given by friends and family in memory of David Paton, an undergraduate at Magdalene College, who died in 1985. The silver gilt boat is a replica of the Ramsey Abbey incense boat (c. 1380). The original is in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

**The Churchyard** In the front churchyard (by Trumpington Street) it is possible to see the poet Gray's fire escape—a metal rod attached to a second floor window at the back of Peterhouse, to which Gray

would attach a rope and slide down into the churchyard in case of fire.

The back churchyard was laid out as a wild garden in 1926, and contains interesting and rare plants and shrubs. It attracts visitors from all over the world.

The parish is twinned with Notre Dame des Grâces, Chant d'Oiseau, Brussels, and with the church of Our Lady, Gerehu, Papua New Guinea. It also has a deep friendship with Emmanuel United Reformed Church which is adjacent, whose tower, by Cubitt, is part of the Cambridge skyline.



## WINDOW IN MEMORY OF CANON JAMES OWEN

**Vicar of Little St Mary's Cambridge 1974-1993**

*designed by Caroline Benyon: dedication July 9th 2000*

The theme is Eucharist. The two fish and five loaves in the left-hand light recall the Eucharistic resonances of the story of the feeding of the five thousand (Jesus took, gave thanks, broke, and distributed.....). In the right hand light are wheat, chalice and grapes, and the dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit is seen over the chalice and grapes.

The design in the two lights is based on circular movements, to symbolise eternity; the colouring of rubies, blue and yellow satin is based on early medieval glass.

### THE SOUTH CHAPEL

In 1998, money which formed part of a generous bequest to Little St Mary's by Eric John Furley (1908-1995), Server, Churchwarden and Treasurer, was used to improve the lighting in the Chapel on the South side of the Church (see p. 3), to redecorate the altar and other furnishings, and to add the Glass Doors at the entrance to the Chapel. These, like the doors at the west entrance of the Church were engraved by Mark Bury of Oakington; there is an inscription asking our prayers for the soul of Eric Furley, and, in the centre of the doors, lines in honour of Our Lady, by Richard Crashaw, Priest at Little St Mary's from 1638-1643

*Let hearts and lips speak loud; and say  
Hail, door of life; and source of day!  
The door was shut, the fountain seal'd;  
Yet light was seen and life revealed.*

The chairs were given by individual donors, in memory of relatives and past worshippers at LSM., including Canon James Owen, Vicar from 1974 until his death in 1993.