

MENSTON 2025 HERITAGE GROUP

The History of the church of St John The Divine, Menston with Woodhead

1858 a licence was granted for a chapel of ease dedicated to St John the Divine at a terraced property in Derry Hill.

1871 current church built in the early Gothic style at a cost of £1,000 on land gifted by the owner of Menston Grange. Large donations, grants and subscriptions are recorded. It is a good example of late 19th century ecclesiastical architecture with a blue slate roof, typical of the times. Built with a bell cote not a tower.

1886 St John's originally had just one aisle. It was soon realised that more seating was needed and the north aisle was added.

1920 In thanksgiving for peace after the First World War, the reredos and panelling in the sanctuary were installed. The reredos is now in the Lady Chapel.

1950 A major re-ordering took place in thanksgiving for peace after the Second World War. New furniture was ordered from Thompson's of Kilburn, the organ was re-built and the pulpit moved to its present position. It originally stood where the lectern is placed.

1971 to mark the centenary The addition of the Lady Chapel and two new vestries. The architect was Michael Ryley and the chapel is dedicated to the memory of his parents.

1972 the old Church Hall was sold to Parmley Graham. The New Parish Room was built on land given by the owner of the nearby house called Whiddon.

2012 The east window was revealed in its full glory by re-siting the main altar reredos into the Lady Chapel.

Woodwork

Most dates from the major refurbishment in 1950 and was built by Thompson's of Kilburn. Some of the items of church furniture eg pew ends, baptistry screen, lectern, pulpit bear the company 'signature'- a carved mouse. Altogether, St John's has 19 such carvings although some of them are not available to find as some pews are currently stored elsewhere. Children enjoy trying to find the 'church mice'!

First World War Memorial

The memorial unusually lists the names of all the men and women of Menston who served in the Great War. A bronze tablet in the centre gives the names of those who fell. A recent booklet by Judith Knaggs gives interesting biographical details of almost all the 50 men who fell. The

memorial to those killed in the Second World War is above the Book of Remembrance.

Organ

The organ chamber was added to the original building in 1890. The 2-manual organ is a fine example of the work of I W Binns of Bramley. It has been rebuilt several times, most recently in 2008.

East Window

The beautiful east window, erected in 1876 in memory of Bertie Markland who gave the land on which St John's is built. It depicts the visit of the Magi to the infant Christ and was designed by John Ward Knowles.

Font and Baptistry Windows

The two windows depict the Annunciation (1901) and the Nativity (1915) and were made by Messrs Taylor and Clifton of London who reputedly made a similar one for Windsor Parish Church.

Children's Windows which are immediately on the left after entering the church were presented by the Sunday School children in 1893.

South Aisle windows

The three small windows depict Stations of the Cross.

An old village custom is to tie the gates during a wedding ceremony and the bride and groom are not allowed to leave until coins are thrown to children outside.

References

<https://www.stjohnmenston.org.uk>

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