

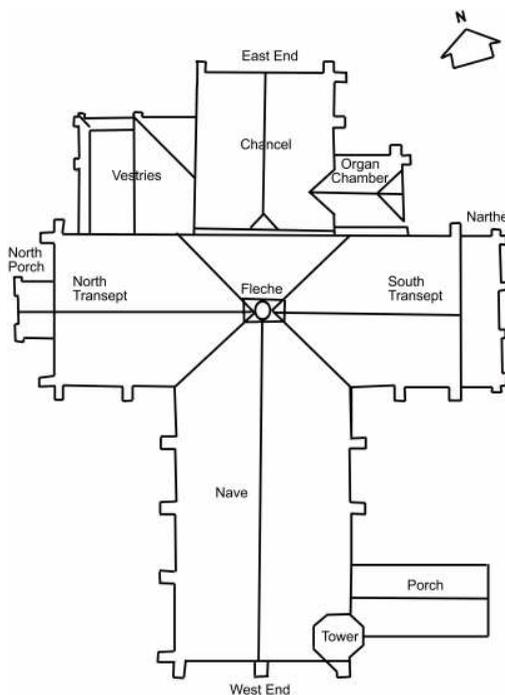
A short guide to the building and decoration of St Mary Plaistow, Bromley

OUTSIDE Work on a new church for this expanding area of Bromley probably began in October 1861 and the **NAVE** was consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury on 15 September 1863. With a balcony at the west end it could accommodate 500. The nave was built so that the planned chancel and transepts could easily be added, and the area of the south wall against which the tower would have been built was left as exposed brickwork. The staircase in the south west corner of the nave



St. Mary's in 1871

gave access to the balcony and would also have served the tower. The purchase of the land and the building of the nave, designed by Waring and Blake, cost £3636.



In 1879 an appeal was launched for funds to build the **CHANCEL**, **ORGAN CHAMBER** AND **VESTRIES** designed by Walter Mallett of Crescent Road. The **FOUNDATION STONE** to be seen in the outside wall under the east window was laid in September 1880 by Lady Scott of Sundridge Park. These additions cost £2065, and were consecrated by the Archbishop in May 1881.

The next addition was the **SOUTH TRANSEPT**, the foundation stone of which (to be seen outside in its east wall) was laid by Lady Scott in July 1891. It increased the seating capacity of the church by about 100. Its **NARTHEX** was designed as the main entrance to the church and was decorated with knapped flint, a quatrefoil frieze and pinnacles. At the same time the **FLECHE** (or spire) over the crossing of the nave and transept roof was erected to improve the ventilation of the church. These additions cost approximately £2000, were designed by Mallett, now resident in Tweedy Road, and were dedicated in January 1892.

A church meeting at Easter 1898 recommended the construction to Mallett's designs of a NORTH TRANSEPT, NORTH PORCH and enlarged VESTRIES. After four graves had been moved the FOUNDATION STONE on the exterior of the transept's north wall was laid by Lady Farquhar (as Lady Scott had now become) in May 1900. The building work cost £2250, created space for 114 more worshippers, and was consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury in October 1900. Plans to build the south aisle and base of the tower were frustrated by the First World War, after which it was decided not to complete the building to Mallett's plan. The brickwork in the west walls of the TRANSEPTS shows where they would have been entered from the NAVE AISLES, had they been built.

The oak, glass and slate PORCH, designed by Paul Sharrock (Thomas Ford & Partners), is the latest structural addition to St Mary's and was completed in 1997.

INSIDE In the late 1870s the decoration of the nave began. The WEST WINDOW depicting the four Evangelists (Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) was installed in 1876, and the following year the small WINDOWS IN THE ROOF at each end of the nave were filled with stained glass.



Also in 1877, at the expense of Walter Bosanquet, the mural of JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD was painted on the west wall, a backdrop to the FONT installed in 1878.

The far right hand window in the nave north wall was given in 1881 in memory of the Emmett family and depicts the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. It, and all later decoration of the church, was the work of the London company Ward and Hughes.



During 1885-88 Murray Richardson paid for the glazing of the remainder of the NAVE WINDOWS with scenes from THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

On the north side, from left to right:



Adoration of the Shepherds
(date unknown)



Visitation of Saint Elizabeth
by Saint Mary (1885)



Flight into Egypt (1888)

South side, from left to right:



Marriage at Cana (1886)



Adoration of the Magi (1888)



Saint John the Baptist preaching
(1886, central light only remaining).



South Chancel

The decoration of the CHANCEL began in 1881 with the glazing of the south windows in memory of two children of Major and Mrs Clement Satterthwaite. A two manual organ (later extended) by Hill and Son was built in 1882, in an oak case designed by Mallett. The next addition was the EAST WINDOW, dedicated in July 1884 as a memorial to Sir Edward Scott, Bt, a pictorial representation of the Te Deum ('We praise Thee O God, we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord ...'). (see *overleaf*) It was designed by Thomas Curtis of Ward and Hughes, who may have been responsible for the earlier stained glass and mural in the church, and seems to have designed all that followed. At the same time Curtis glazed the NORTH CHANCEL WINDOW with a depiction of St John the Divine, a memorial to his father funded by Murray Richardson.

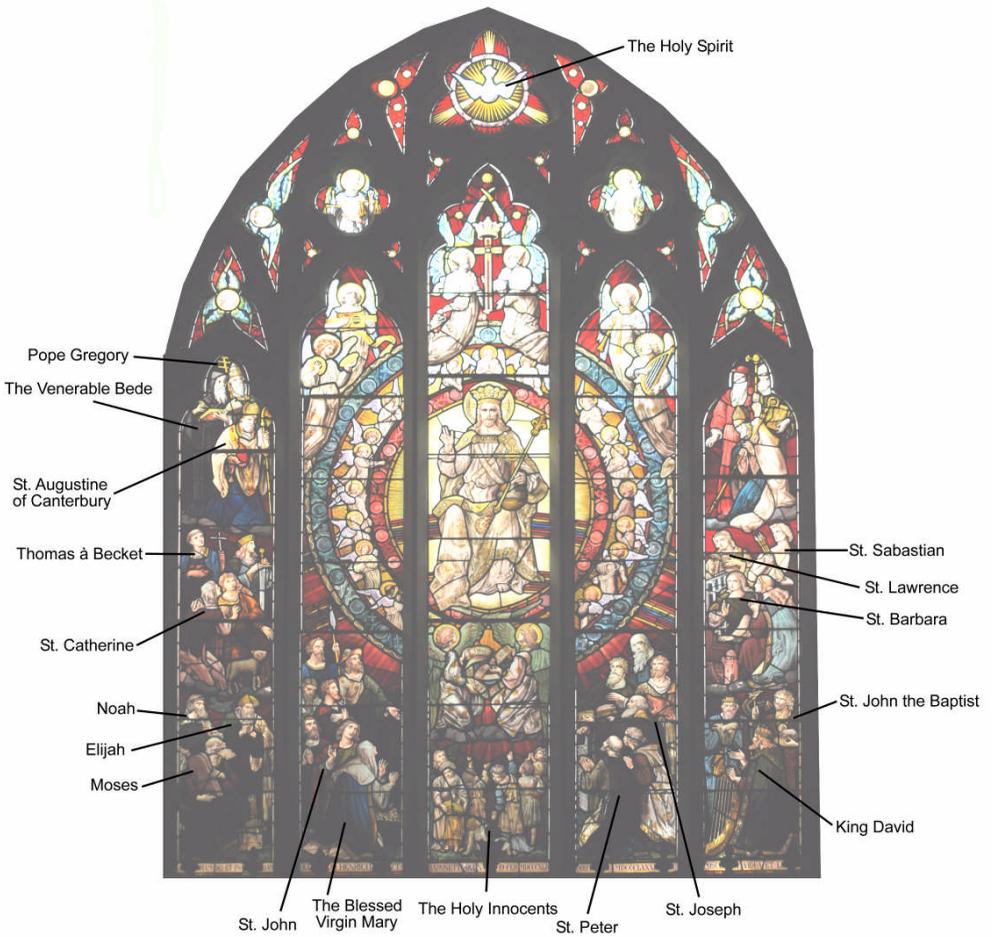


North Chancel

THE EAST WINDOW



Christ Seated In Glory surrounded by characters from scripture and tradition



Richardson next commissioned Curtis to paint the ceiling and walls of the CHANCEL. Angels were used extensively as 'fillers' and the east wall became an extension of the scene depicted in the window that it surrounds. The north and south walls illustrate a number of themes, which are best explored beginning with the south wall. Running around the top of both the south and north walls are a series of shields painted with the INSTRUMENTS OF CHRIST'S PASSION: from right to left above the south windows are:



*the Pillar, Scourge
and Crown of Thorns*



Coat and Dice

then on the north from the right:



30 Pieces of Silver



Cross and Ladder



Hammer and Nails



Spear and Sponge

Returning to the south wall, east of the organ are (from the left) Saints Prisca, Faith, Agatha and Anne;



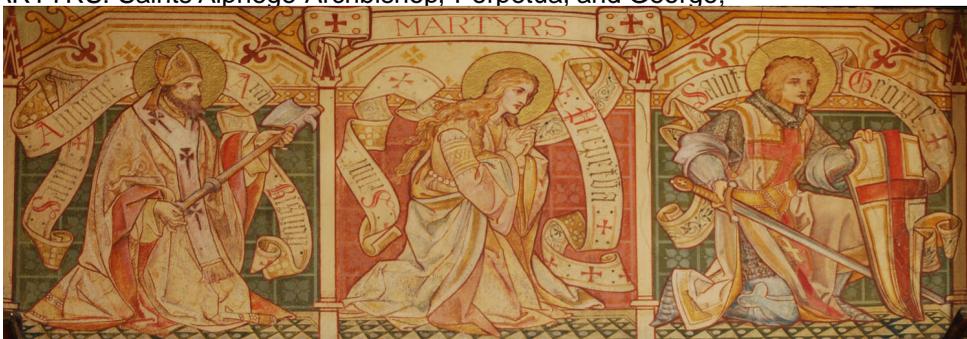
and either side of the organ the arms of Satterthwaite (left) and the Diocese of Canterbury (right).



On the north chancel wall, beneath the Instruments are a series of portraits of (from the left): CONFESSORS: Saints Martin of Tours, Leonard, and Hugh of Lincoln;



MARTYRS: Saints Alphege Archbishop, Perpetua, and George;



and VIRGINS: Saints Etheldreda, Lucy, and Margaret.



Either side of the north window are Saints James the Great and Peter.



However, the bulk of the wall is taken up with large illustrations of three Bible texts that refer to the OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES TO JESUS. From the left: 'They drank of that Spiritual Rock that followed them and that Rock was Christ' (1 Cor 10, 4);



'Our Fathers did eat Manna in the desert as it is written He gave them Bread from Heaven to eat' (John 6, 31);



'As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of Man be lifted up. That whosoever believest in Him shall not perish but have Eternal Life' (John 3, 14-15).





The chancel murals were complete by Easter 1893, and on Christmas Eve 1893 the ALTAR REREDOS was brought into use, another work of Ward and Hughes funded by Richardson. The Crucifixion on the centre panel is flanked by the Agony in the Garden and Saints Matthew and Mark (left) with (right) Luke and John and the Entombment.



To complete the decoration of the Chancel in 1897 panels painted to represent the Adoration of the Immaculate Lamb were added to the front of the ALTAR.

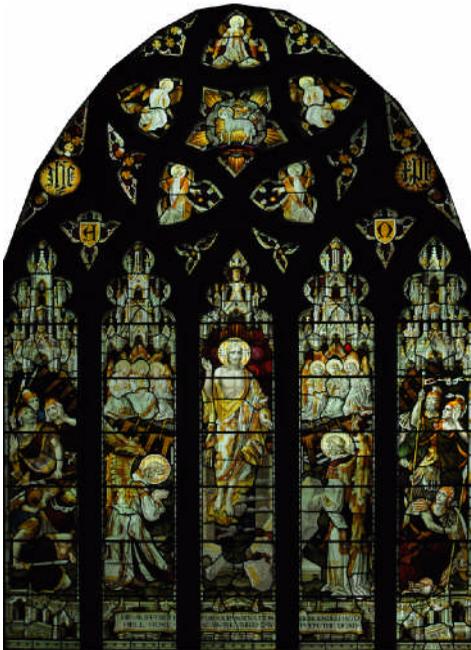




The most recent murals were painted on the west side of the CHANCEL ARCH, given in 1896 by the children of William and Charlotte Bowley of Springhill, which stood on what is now Plaistow Green. This work of Ward and Hughes illustrated the TWO DISPENSATIONS: the OLD, represented on the left by a Prophet (Hosea), Priest (Aaron) and King (David); the NEW (on the right) by a Bishop (Saint Augustine of Canterbury), Priest (the Venerable Bede) and Deacon (Saint Stephen).



Richardson paid for the STAINED GLASS in both of the TRANSEPTS. In the SOUTH, dated 1892 - the Resurrection in the large south window, the Confession of Saint Thomas in the east window, and opposite, in the south west window, Jesus meeting Saint Mary Magdalene on Easter morning.



The Resurrection



Confession of St. Thomas



Jesus meeting Saint Mary Magdalene

The north west window was glazed with plain glass - it would have been removed when the south nave aisle - an addition by Mallett to the original plan - was built. In the NORTH TRANSEPT, dated 1900 - the large north window illustrates the Ascension and the north west the Miraculous Draught of Fishes, the south west being left plain pending its removal to provide access to the planned north aisle. In the east wall two small windows contain Crowned Ms for Saint Mary as Queen of Heaven (north) and the Annunciation (south). In the CHOIR VESTRY the north window depicts angel musicians and singers.



The Ascension



The Miraculous Draught of Fishes



Crowned Ms



Annunciation



Choir vestry

To mark the fiftieth anniversary of St Mary's in 1913 the CHANCEL SCREEN and GATES were erected. No further stained glass or murals have been added and later alterations have been limited to changes in furniture and fittings and in the use of existing spaces. The South Transept was converted from seating into a RESURRECTION CHAPEL as part of the Centenary Celebrations in 1963; the altar, rail and sanctuary lamp being later transferred to the North Transept in 2002 on the creation of an area to accommodate families with young children. The NAVE ALTAR was installed in 1985.



Chancel screen and gates



North Transept



Nave Altar

*Prepared in September 2007 by Peter Boyden, Churchwarden
Pictures added by Revd. Alan Keeler September 2010*