

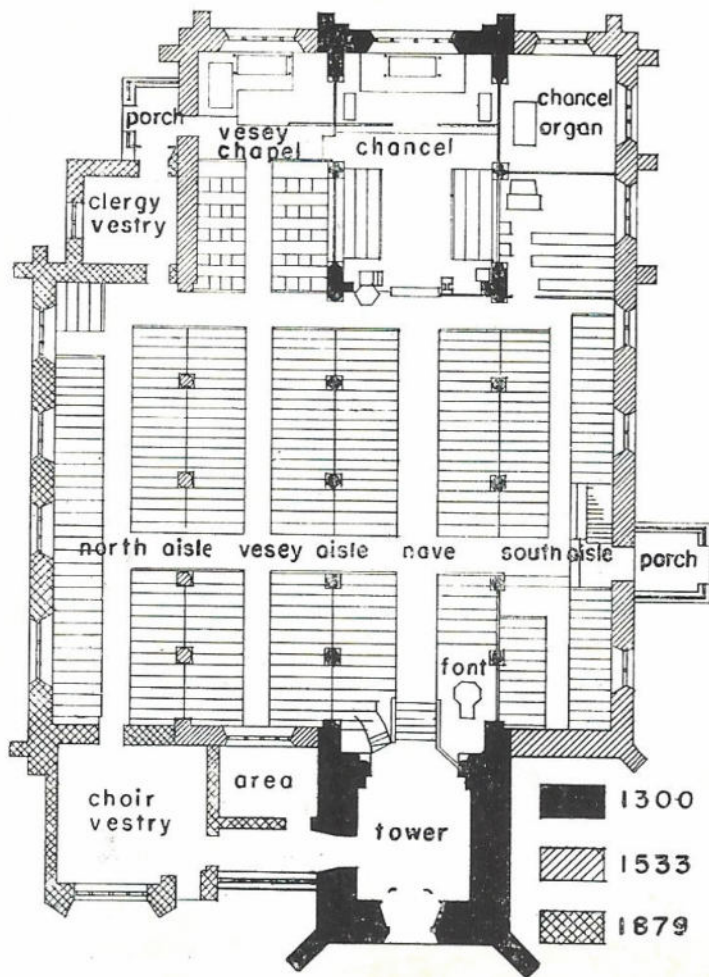
Photograph by Kirkman

The Story of Sutton Coldfield Parish Church

Although it is not possible to determine with certainty the exact date of the foundation of the church, records suggest that the building began at the latest in 1300. Dugdale, in his history of Warwickshire dated 1730, suggests an earlier date, for in his section on Sutton Coldfield he writes: "The Church (dedicated to the Holy Trinitie) was in 1291 (19E1) valued at 20 marks", but the Reverend W. K. R. Bedford in his history of the town, records the date of the first incumbent, Gregory Harold, as 1305. Little remains of the original building, except possibly the lower stage of the tower and the lower part of the east wall of the chancel. This has an early plinth, and perhaps the remains of shallow clasping buttresses. Originally the church consisted of a chancel and nave only. Bishop Vesey in 1553 added the north and south aisles and two side-chapels. Part of the nave is said to have collapsed in 1759, and to have been re-built in the following year by the Corporation (then the Warden and Society). The round arches of the nave are not of Norman origin, but are attempts of the builders to imitate the lines of the bishop's addition to the chancel. In 1863 the whole building was re-roofed, and in 1879 a new aisle was added on the north side. In 1926 the fabric of the church was in a poor condition. The stone work on the south side was perished, and it was necessary to replace much of it. The south roof had also to be re-leaded. The work done to the inside of the roof of the nave was completed by 1929, and marked a step of considerable importance in the

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MINIMUM PRICE, SIXPENCE

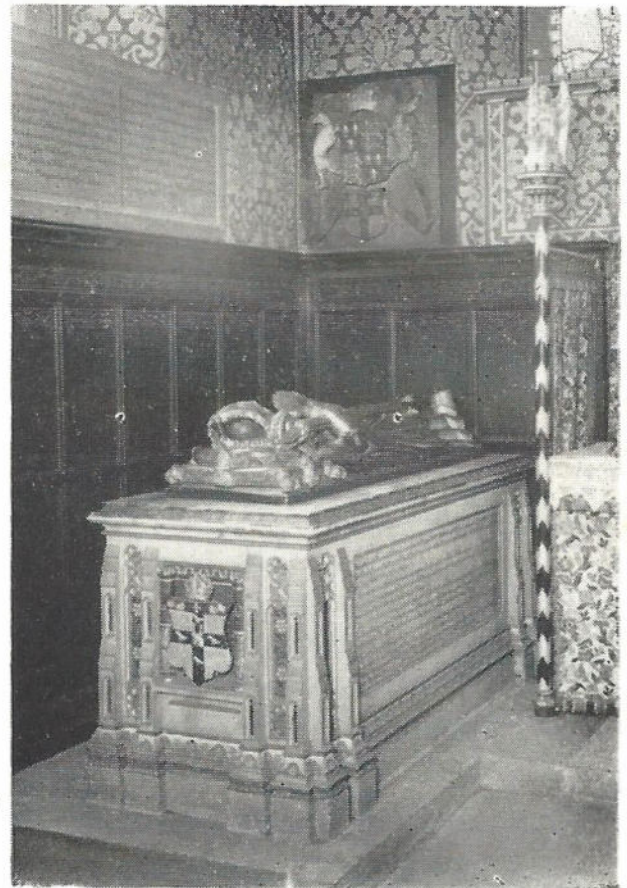


history of modern English church decoration. The cost of maintaining the fabric is a source of continuous expenditure, and a considerable sum has been spent since 1945 in keeping the church in good repair.

The carved oak in the chancel is part of the old choir and organ loft of Worcester Cathedral removed at the time of its restoration about 1878. The portion between the chancel and the former south chapel, according to the Reverend W. K. R. Bedford in his *History of Sutton Coldfield* dates from 1618. According to the same authority the columns and seats for the choir, of Italian design, were placed in Worcester Cathedral some sixty years later by Bishop Fleetwood.

The decoration of the chancel roof was done in 1914 and designed by Mr. C. E. Bateman. The screen in the upper part of the east arch between the chancel and the chancel organ was erected in 1938 in memory of Mr. J. C. Skelton, who was for 33 years a churchwarden of the Parish Church. The Communion Table was presented in memory of Mrs. W. K. R. Bedford who died in 1890. The hangings and riddle-posts, which date from 1929, are arranged on the lines of an Old English Altar.

The chapel on the north side of the chancel is known as the Vesey Chapel because in it, over the vault in which lie his bones, is a monument to Bishop Vesey. This is an altar tomb, with a recumbent effigy in the full episcopal vestments in use before the Reformation. The effigy was, in the opinion of the best judges, executed from life, but the original base was destroyed in 1748. It was placed in its present position in 1875, after being thoroughly renovated. On the north wall of the Vesey Chapel is a monument containing the busts of Henry Pudsey of Langley Hall, who died in 1677, and his wife Jane. It was the work of William Wilson,



THE VESEY TOMB

Photograph by Kirkman

afterwards knighted, a pupil and assistant of Sir Christopher Wren. Later he married Jane Pudsey, Henry's widow, and built for their occupation the Moat House in Lichfield Road. The screen at the entrance to the chapel was erected in 1929 by Mrs. Cory in memory of her father, Canon C. W. Barnard. The Communion table was placed in the chapel in the same year.

The font, which is much older than the church, was turned out of Over Whitacre church in the 18th century and after being degraded to various uses, including use as a horse block outside an inn at Shustoke, was presented to the parish church in 1856. The font has a circular slightly cup-shaped bowl of the 12th century. The lower half is faced with an interlacing arcade in low relief. At the top are four prominently projecting grotesque heads with straps in their mouths issuing at the sides and meeting each side in pairs of leaves.



INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH

Photograph by T. G. Williams



THE FONT

Photograph by Kirkman

The vestibule, or inner porch, underneath the new organ is of carved oak from Worcester Cathedral and from St. Michael's Church, Coventry, the handles of the doors being brass dolphins from Valletta. About 1903, the new vestries were added at the north side of the tower. In 1556 Richard Veisey, yeoman, bequeathed—3s. and 4d. toward the casting of the fryste bell, and making it consonant with the other bells. About 1760 the church was provided with a clock and a chime of six bells. They soon became out of tune, and in 1786 the inhabitants preferred the expense of a new fine chime of six bells, to an outlay of money in flagging the streets, the option having been placed before them. In 1884, the bells were repaired, and two more added. It is probable that the clock was removed at this time.

Bishop Vesey gave an organ to the church costing £14 2s. 8d. in 1533. There must have been an organ from this time, but there is no accurate information about this until 1900. In this year the Hope Jones' New Electric organ was dedicated by the then Rector, the Reverend W. C. R. Bedford.

In 1950, Wm. Hill and Son, and Norman and Beard built a new organ in a chamber in the West Arch, and also a chancel organ which was placed in the S.E. corner of the church. The cost of these installations was nearly £7,000. The instruments were dedicated by the Lord Bishop of Birmingham (Dr. E. W. Barnes) on December 9th, 1950 at a service to commemorate the 650th anniversary of the foundation of the church.

A modern window was placed in the church in February, 1956 in memory of Ernest William Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham, 1924 - 53. It consists of three lights. In the middle light is shown the coat of arms of the diocese impaled with that of Dr. Barnes, around them the Bishop's regalia. Underneath is a small picture of St. Philip's Cathedral and above is the coat of arms of the Royal Society, of which the Bishop was a Fellow. The coat of arms of King Edward's School, Birmingham, of which he was a pupil and former governor, and a small picture of the old school are in the left hand light. Above them is the coat of arms of Trinity College, Cambridge, of which the Bishop was a scholar and later a Fellow. At the bottom of the right-hand light is a view of Westminster Abbey, where the Bishop was a Canon, and the coat of arms of the Abbey. In the centre is a small view of the Temple Church, where he was Master and above is the coat of arms of King's College, London, of which he was a Fellow.

J.H.B.

Rectors of Sutton Coldfield

	A.D.		A.D.
GREGORY HAROLD - - -	1305	JOHN TAYLOR, D.D. - - -	1504
ROBERT HILARY - - -	1317	GEORGE HENEAGE, L.L.D. - - -	1516
WILLIAM SHEPRAGG - - -	1326	JOHN BURGES, S.T.B. - - -	1521
JOHN DE BUCKINGHAM - - -	1345	RALPH WENDON - - -	1527
WILLIAM DE SHAMEBURNE - - -	1348	JOHN FODON - - -	1563
SIMON BASSET DE SAPCOTE - - -	1349	PETER SANKYE - - -	1583
WILLIAM DE BARTON - - -	1361	ROGER ELYOT - - -	1595
RALPH DE FRISEBY - - -	1361	JOHN BURGES, M.D. - - -	1617
ROGER DE TANGLEY - - -	1382	ANTHONY BURGES, D.D. - - -	1635
NICHOLAS STOKES - - -	1389	WILLIAM WATSON - - -	1662
RALPH BROMLEY - - -	1391	JOHN RILAND, M.A. - - -	1689
THOMAS HENSTER - - -	1391	RICHARD RILAND, M.A. - - -	1720
RICHARD PENNE - - -	1397	RICHARD BISSE RILAND, M.A. - - -	1758
JOHN DE MALVERNE - - -	1397	JOHN RILAND, M.A. - - -	1790
RICHARD PENNE - - -	1401	WILLIAM RILAND BEDFORD, M.A. - - -	1822
LEWIS BEELTE - - -	1412	RICHARD WILLIAMSON, D.D. - - -	1843
JOHN ARUNDEL - - -	1431	W. K. RILAND BEDFORD, M.A. - - -	1850
JOHN ADAMS - - -	1433	W. C. RILAND BEDFORD, M.A. - - -	1892
THOMAS HILL - - -	1436	CHARLES W. BARNARD, M.A. - - -	1909
JOHN STONES - - -	1463	WILLIAM J. LYON, M.A. - - -	1926
RICHARD BRACKENBERG - - -	1469	GEORGE L. H. HARVEY, M.A. - - -	1931
EDWARD SCOTT, L.L.D. - - -	1499	JOHN H. BOGGON, M.A. - - -	1945