



*The Parish Church of*  
**St Mary the Virgin**  
**Handsworth**



*Celebrating 850 years*

# Introduction & Welcome

**D**EAR Friends,  
Welcome to St Mary's, which has been described as "The Little Gem of South East Sheffield". On the surface Handsworth might appear as a mere suburb of the sprawling City of Sheffield. However, I hope this guide will be a taster of the rich history of this community; with its contribution to the industrial and civic progress of the nation and its ancient parish church. It is a building full of history, connection to political power of yesteryear and interesting architectural features.

Although we are full of history and part of the fabric of the nation's history, this is a working church, offering worship to Almighty God; celebrating important life events in the lives of many such as baptisms, marriages and funerals. We are engaged in the community by providing various activities and pastoral ministry as well as through our partnership with the Old Rectory, which is St Mary's gift to the locality.

You might want to take a look at the virtual tour of St Mary's. It can be found on the bottom of the homepage of our website: [www.stmaryshandsworth.org.uk](http://www.stmaryshandsworth.org.uk). Current events and occasions can also be found on our Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/StMarysHandsworthSheff](https://www.facebook.com/StMarysHandsworthSheff). More information is available at the museum based in the Old Rectory.

I want to express my gratitude to those who have made this guide possible: Elizabeth Lees (Development Worker for the Holy Redeemer Mission Partnership, of which we are part), Futurekraft and Awards for All, but especially Lizzie and those who have provided information to her.

**Fr Keith Johnson**  
Rector, 2020



## Key to Symbols

### *Points of religious interest*

- 1) Lectern
- 2) Font
- 3) Nave Altar
- 4) Altar (St Katherine's)
- 5) High Altar
- 6) Reredos
- 7) Squint
- 8) Pulpit

### *Statues*

- 1) Our Lady of Walsingham
- 2) St Katherine
- 3) Our Lady, Mary Mother of Jesus

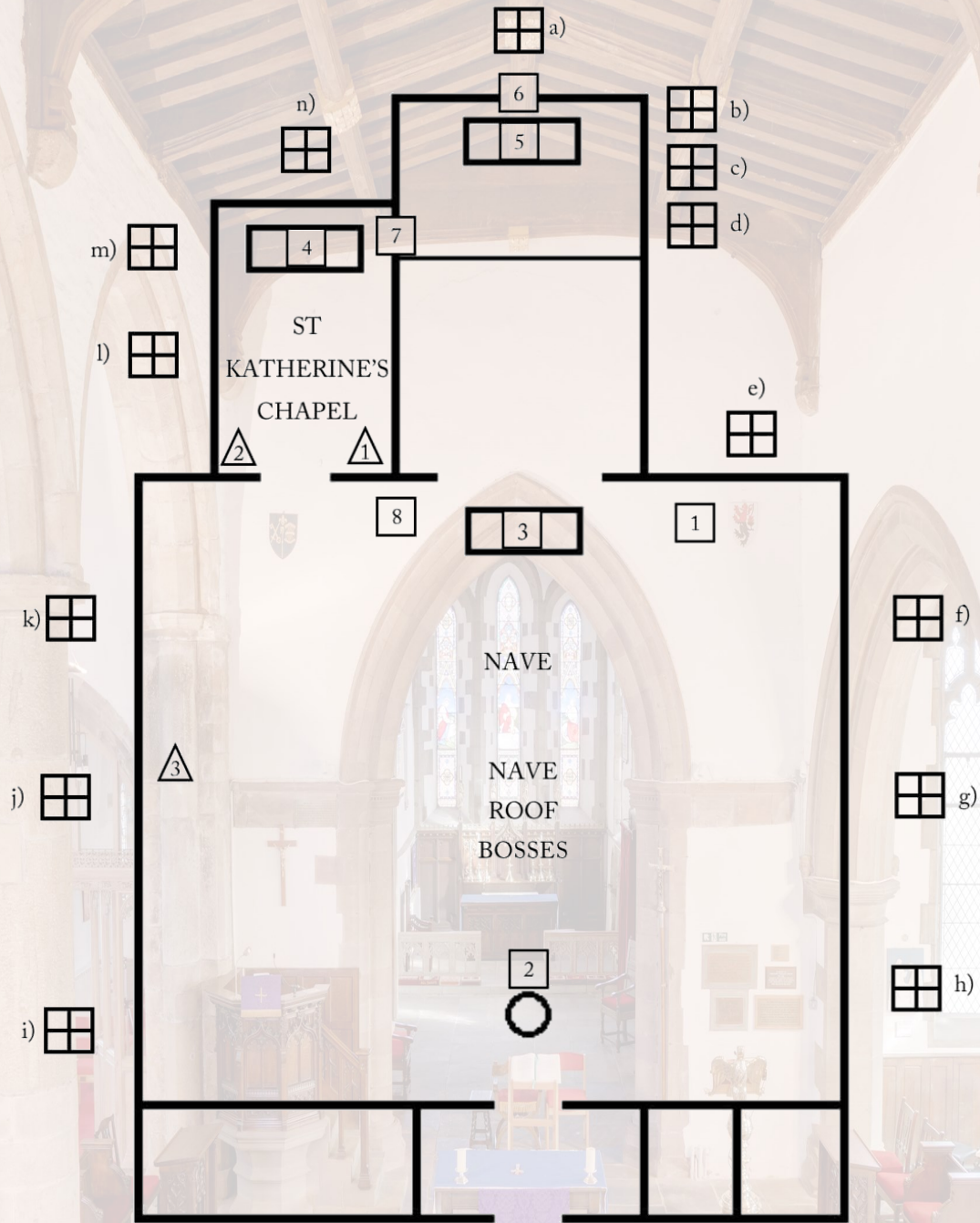
### *Windows*

- a) Agony of Gethsemane & The Last Supper
- b) The Annunciation
- c) The Risen Lord
- d) The Stable at Bethlehem
- e) Joseph in his Dream & The Visitation
- f) The Whole Armour of God
- g) The Three Virtues
- h) The Nativity
- i) Our Lord Teaching & the Holy Family at Work
- j) Healing the Sick & Feeding the Hungry
- k) Via Dolorosa & Calvary

### *In St Katherine's Chapel*

- l) St Peter & St Paul
- m) St Cuthbert & St Oswald
- n) St Katherine & St Margaret with Mary & Our Lady & Our Lord

# Floor Plan



# Handsworth

**H**ANDSWORTH is a suburb on the south-east side of Sheffield covering approximately 5 square miles. There has been evidence of human settlement in the area dating back over 3,000 years. A Bronze Age axehead was found at the bottom of Britton Hill (the hill leading to Richmond). There have always been large houses in Handsworth: Orgreave Hall, Rotherwood Hall, Handsworth Hall, Richmond Hall, Woodthorpe Hall, Ballifield Hall and Bramley Hall. Only the latter two are standing today. Although Handsworth has been swallowed into the modern day Sheffield metropolis (it is home to local businesses and light industries), many residents feel that the area still has a village feel to it.

## *What does it mean?*

The name Handsworth derives from the Anglo-Saxon 'Handeswrde' meaning 'the homestead around where Hand lived'.

Handsworth featured in the Domesday Book where it was joined to form a single manor with Whiston, now part of nearby Rotherham.

Some surrounding placenames suggest that there were settlements in the area around the ninth or tenth centuries:

- **Normanton Springs** – the springs near the Northmen's town i.e. Hackenthorpe
- **Ballifield** – the field belonging to Balle, the Dane
- **Woodthorpe** – the thorp (i.e. small village) in a wood



**The Domesday Book** was a large handwritten survey compiled by the Normans in 1086 after their invasion of England twenty years before. It was ordered by William the Conqueror so that he might be able to discover the worth of his new kingdom.

The Lord of the Manor prior to the Norman Conquest was Torchill, but the Manor was handed over to Robert, Count of Mortain who was half-brother to William the Conqueror. Control then passed to the Paganel family of Hooton Pagnell, which is located fifteen miles to the North. The Paganel (or Paynel) family were great landowners in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and other English counties, and benefactors and founders of many monasteries and churches. William Paynel came to his inheritance around 1150 but died at the turn of the century. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Handsworth was passed to the Lovetot family who built St Mary's Church after the foundations were planned, if not laid, by William Paynel.



# A History of St Mary's Church

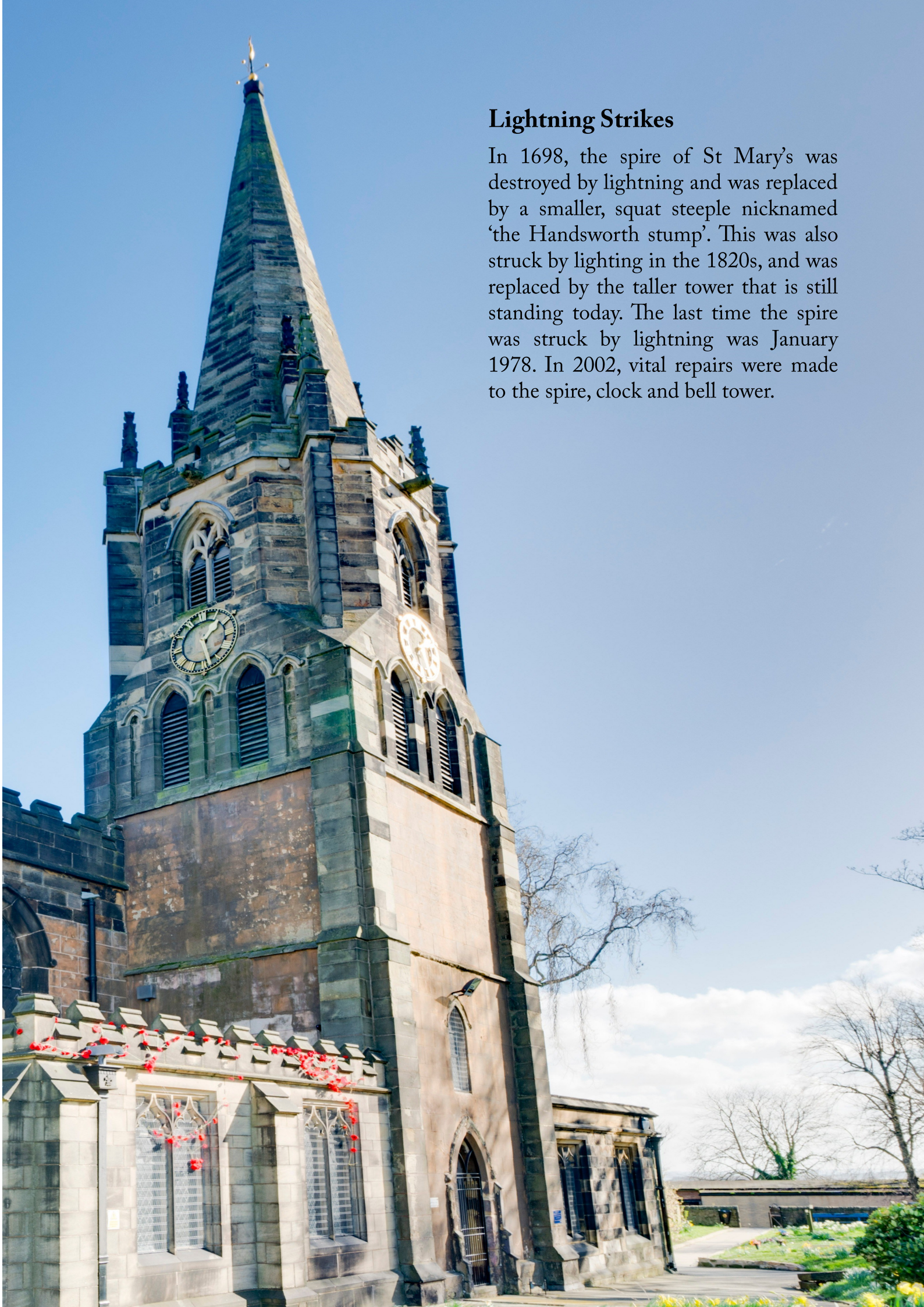
**T**HE church of St Mary the Virgin was built in 1170 by the Lovetot Family, in order to satisfy the increasing need of the local community for a permanent priest. Only the chancel, sidechapel and lower part of the tower are Norman, other parts of the church are Tudor, Victorian and 20<sup>th</sup> century. St Mary's was a Royal Peculiar, belonging to the Dean & Chapter of York. In 1651 two Quakers, Thomas Towndrow and William Spray, were arrested at St Mary's for preaching inside the church and for refusing to remove their hats.

- In 1472 the Fabric Rolls of York described St Mary's Handsworth as "ruinous" but it was being rebuilt at that time.
- The roof of the nave is Tudor and features bosses (see p. 27) of the Tudor Rose and the Talbots (Earls of Shrewsbury). The Nave roof is lower than the 13<sup>th</sup> century Chancel one.
- St Mary's Church sits at the highest point in Handsworth, standing at 411.7 feet above sea level. There is a benchmark on the tower which used to be used as a reference point for surveying. It is one of two surviving original benchmarks in Handsworth. The other is on the gatepost to the former Ballifield Hall.

## The Roof

St Mary's originally had a lead roof until 1975, when it was stripped and damage was found to the timbers. It was decided that the church should have a stainless steel roof and it took one month for it to be assembled. St Mary's is one of only five churches in Great Britain to have such a roof, and the only one in Yorkshire. There is a photo of the roof on the previous page.





## Lightning Strikes

In 1698, the spire of St Mary's was destroyed by lightning and was replaced by a smaller, squat steeple nicknamed 'the Handsworth stump'. This was also struck by lightning in the 1820s, and was replaced by the taller tower that is still standing today. The last time the spire was struck by lightning was January 1978. In 2002, vital repairs were made to the spire, clock and bell tower.

# Landowners

## The Lovetots & De Furnivals

The Town of Sheffield is said to have been founded by **William de Lovetot**, or possibly by his father, Richard, in the 12th century. The Lovetots also built Sheffield Castle and founded the Town Parish Church, now Sheffield Cathedral, as well as Worksop Priory in Nottinghamshire. The estates were then passed onto **Gerard de Furnival** through a marriage to Maude (Matilda) de Lovetot (great-granddaughter of William), who was a ward of Henry II.

*Window of the Worthies  
A window in Sheffield Cathedral depicting  
William de Lovetot and Gerard de Furnival*



## The Earl of Shrewsbury

The estates passed from the Furnivals to the Talbot family in the **George Talbot, 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Shrewsbury** in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and it was thanks to this family that the rebuilding process took place.

In 1568, it was reported that George was the wealthiest peer of England with an income of £10,000 a year. He was a leading aristocrat during the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, and donated a bell known as the Shrewsbury Bell to St Mary's in commemoration of the defeat of the Spanish Armada. The bell was recast so it is able to be rung today.

George was also gaoler to Mary Queen of Scots, and the fourth and last husband of **Bess of Hardwick**. Her second marriage to a William Cavendish produced a grandson of the same name. This **William Cavendish** was born at Handsworth Hall and baptised at St Mary's. He was governor to Charles Stuart and a Royalist during the English Civil War. William's loyalty was rewarded at the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660 when he was made 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Newcastle by Charles II. His uncle was the first Earl of Devonshire.

The Barony of Furnival fell to the 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Norfolk via Alethea Howard in 1651.



*George Talbot,  
6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Shrewsbury*



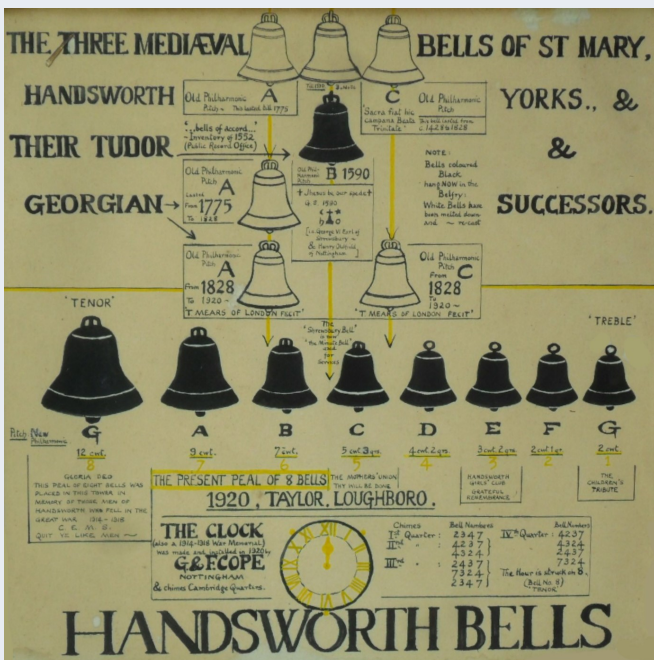
# The Tower & Bells

THE tower arch at the back of the Nave is a fine example of Transitional Norman work. The tower itself has been rebuilt several times; the present tower was built in 1825 and rises to 90 feet.

The 1552 inventory at the Public Record Office states that there have been bells at Handsworth since 1428 and for many years, there were only three. The oldest bell, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, was cast in the 15th century and the “Shrewsbury” bell was cast in 1590. The latter rings as a toll before the service and for the Angelus by a striking hammer. The first and third of the old three bells were recast in 1828 and the metal was used to cast the present ring of eight bells. Together with a clock and chimes, these were added in 1920 as a memorial to those killed in the First World War, and were paid for by local organisations.

The **bells and clock** were dedicated on 18th December 1920 by the first Bishop of Sheffield, Dr. Leonard Hedley Burrows. The first band to ring was comprised of a band of ex-Servicemen. They also rang the first peal on the bells a year later. The bells are light and easy-going; there have always been female ringers. The first peal of Major by an all-female band was rung on 7th January 1928.

**For more information on learning to ring, please visit the Bellinging page of our website:**  
<https://stmaryshandsworth.org.uk/bell-ringing/>



*A handwritten summary and history of the bells and clock by former Tower Captain, John JL Gilbert MBE.*

*An overhead view of the bells in the belfry*

# The Nave

LIKE most churches, the central part of St Mary's is the **Nave** stretching from the main entrance to the Chancel. The Nave is similar to an upside down boat and the word derives from the Latin 'navis' meaning 'ship'. This symbolises Noah's Ark, which represents the Church as the Ark of Salvation.



The **Baptismal Font (2)** is situated at the back of the Nave and is of the late 19th century. The Sacrament of Baptism marks a person beginning their Christian journey, which is why the font is placed near to the main entrance at the west end. The journey then continues up the nave towards the altar, where the person is confirmed into the family of the Church. They are then able to receive Holy Communion (the bread and wine, which is the Body and Blood of Jesus) as a part of their commitment of faith. The font is octagonal in shape - 7 sides representing the 7 days of creation and the 8th side for the octave (8th) day of New Creation inaugurated on the Day of Resurrection.

The **pillars** in the Nave are of Transitional Norman style, featuring a pointed arch. The builders were developing 'Early English' out of the Norman style – two columns and one arch are round, the rest octagonal, half round or pointed.

Unfortunately, this arcade was lifted by inserting large stones in the columns to allow for a North-aisle gallery in 1833. This was subsequently removed 50 years later.



There are 14 **Stations of the Cross** in the Nave. They depict the events from Jesus's condemnation until his burial. They are aids to meditation on the Passion of Christ and are called 'stations' because they are stopping places in the procession from one picture to the next. They begin in the North Aisle, the procession following the penitential route of North to South.

Looking towards the **Chancel**, the Jacobean **pulpit (8)** is situated on the left and the lectern on the right. The pulpit was originally sited south-west of its current position on the south side of the Nave until 1904. The Parish Clerk's desk was beneath and now in the Sacristy. The **lectern (1)** is in the common shape of an eagle and was designed by W. Birks in 1895.



At the top of the Nave is the **Nave Altar (3)** – this is where Mass is offered. The colour of vestments (what the priest wears during services) and altar frontals is determined by the time of year the Church is celebrating. The colour is usually green for Ordinary Time (when nothing special is happening), purple for the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent and gold or white for large feasts such as Christmas and Easter. Red is for Palm Sunday, Pentecost and martyred saints days.



The **organ** was built by John Snetzler, a German builder, who moved to London in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Prior to its installation at St Mary's in 1831, the organ was at Sandbeck Hall near Maltby. It was previously situated in St Katherine's Chapel then in the south aisle before being moved to its present location at the back of the nave. The organ undergoes restorative work every few decades.



The North aisle houses the statue of **Our Lady (3)**, the patroness of this church. There is the opportunity to light candles and pray by this statue.

The choir vestry (now the sacristy) was built in 1930 to celebrate the founding of the Handsworth Deanery three years previously. The South Aisle and the porch were added in 1904. In the South aisle is the children's corner and the place where the choir sit during services. The coat of arms of William IV is above the main entrance door.





# The Chancel

**The chancel** is the Eastern part of the church surrounding the altar and is reserved for clergy and choir. It is common for there to be a screen or steps separating the chancel from the nave. It derives from the Latin 'cancelli' meaning 'lattice work'.

**T**HE east wall of the Chancel was extended in the 13th century, from the high altar Communion rails, to its present location. The rails were presented by the children of the parish in memory of parishioners who fell in the First World War and they separate the chancel and sanctuary. The tomb of Rev'd. Michael Adams (Rector, 1612-1627) lies in a crypt underneath where the original altar would have stood. The **wagon roof** (like a covered wagon) is 13th century in style and some of the beams are original. The triple lancet windows and nail-head ornamentation along the cornice are also all 13th century. The present **chancel arch** of the Gothic style was built in 1870 to correspond with the tower arch. This replaced the apsidal Norman Chancel Arch of 1241. There would have been a rood screen and rood cross where the arch is before the Reformation.

The chancel contains a now-sealed **12<sup>th</sup> century Rector's door** (see right). A Norman coffin lid was re-cut and used as its lintel. Next to this on the right is a low-side window, again sealed, dating 1441. This was where the Sanctus bell was rung at mass. The hinges alone remain. The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) is now heard at this place. The painting is *The Return of the Prodigal Son* by Rembrandt.



**Rood** (meaning cross) screens enclosed chancels 'to preserve the mystery of the Eucharist'. The Rood Screen normally contained a Crucifix often featuring Mary & St John at the sides of Jesus.



# The Sanctuary

**I**N the sanctuary is the **ambry**, a stone cupboard used in the Middle Ages for housing the Blessed Sacrament. The Sacrament is now housed in the chapel and the Holy Oils (Oil of the Sick, Oil of Catechumens and Oil of Chrism) are now kept in the ambry.



Moving around the sanctuary clockwise, is the **oak reredos (6)**, a decorative piece or screen behind the altar often featuring religious imagery. The reredos at St Mary's was erected in memory of James Mowat, Rector (1871-1915) and his wife Anna Laura. In front of this facing East is the **High Altar (5)**. This would have been the main altar in the Middle Ages.



## The Squint (7)

St Mary's is famed for its medieval squint (hagioscope), which is cut through the North Wall of the Chancel into St Katherine's Chapel. This gave those in the Chapel a view of the host and chalice being elevated in the Mass at the High Altar. It is very rare to find a hagioscope and piscina (squint and a basin) in one structure. This particular piscina is most likely to be the rough local workmanship of the 13th century.

On the opposite side to the ambry there is a piscina (a basin) and double sedilia (a set of multiple seats on the south side of the sanctuary where the officiating clergy sat).







# St Katherine's Chapel

THE Chapel of St Katherine was built around 1225 and has always been associated with the Lords of the Manor (Earls of Shrewsbury, and later Dukes of Norfolk) – they had a reserved pew for over 300 years. The Lord of the Manor was always regarded as responsible for the decoration of the Chapel. The Chapel was built by Maud de Lovetot, as a chantry chapel, so that masses could be said for her late husband, Gerard de Furnival, and son, Thomas who were killed in the fifth and sixth crusades in the Holy Land. St Katherine of Alexandria was a popular Saint of the Crusaders and the Chapel had an independent life. Separate offerings of bread and wine were recorded in 1535. It originally had its own entrance door in the North-East corner to the graveyard and there would have been a Holy Water stoup. This would have been a small basin holding Holy Water (blessed water). It was customary for people to cross themselves with the water on their way in and out of church. The chantry priest of this chapel was housed at the now Chantry Inn.



*Statue of St Katherine of Alexandria (2)*

**The Reformation** took place in the 16th century all across Europe when people started questioning the Catholic Church. The English Reformation was caused by the Church breaking from Rome and papal authority under Henry VIII. It was more of a political affair than religious, as the Church refused to grant Henry a divorce from his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, in order for him to marry Anne Boleyn. In 1534 the Act of Supremacy was passed, declaring Henry as 'Supreme Head of the Church of England'.

Henry instructed that churches should be assessed on their wealth. This led to many valuable religious artefacts belonging to churches, cathedrals, monasteries and abbeys being destroyed. A lot of screens were ripped out or damaged.

Prior to the Reformation there was a Screen between the Chapel and the Chancel, but this was destroyed as many others were. The arch of Transitional Norman style was lowered at some stage, possibly to permit an organ gallery which was erected in 1807. The current carved oak screen was given in 1934 by George and Ruth Roe when the Chapel underwent a restoration.

The Blessed Sacrament is housed in the Tabernacle in St Katherine's Chapel. The Blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Body is reserved so it can be taken to the sick and housebound, following ancient church custom.



*Statue of Our Lady of Walsingham (1)*



# Artefacts

THE church owns an Elizabethan Silver Cup dated 1571. In 1570, the Archbishop of York declared that chalices were to be melted down and transformed into Communion Cups – ours is one of these cups.



The tankard was created in 1805 and are made of old Sheffield plate, a layered combination of silver and copper. This process was replaced in 1840 by electroplating.



The travel set of chalice, jug and paten are of Arts & Crafts style; a decorative style that was popular in the late nineteenth-century.

# Some notable past Rectors

<b>SIMON FOLIOT</b>	the first known Rector is named in ten charters between 1190 and 1218. He had an assistant called William. The family of Foliot held the Lordship of Fenwick and Norton, near Doncaster.
<b>HUGH</b>	was a benefactor of Beauchief Abbey, which was founded in 1183.
<b>ADAM DE BROME</b>	was a Justice Itinerant, Almoner to King Edward II, Chancellor of Durham, Archdeacon of Stow, and the Founder and First Provost of Oriel College, Oxford (1325).
<b>ROBERT RASYN</b>	was chaplain and seneschal to John Talbot, the first Earl of Shrewsbury - the famous "English Achilles"
<b>WILLAM GREYBURNE</b>	was the first Provost of Jesus College, Rotherham, which was founded by Thomas Rotherham, Bishop of Lincoln in 1482.
<b>JOHN MORTON</b>	resigned the benefice during Henry VIII's reformation, and appears to have been re-instated under Mary I in 1554.
<b>JOHN HOSYER</b>	succeeded John Morton in 1544 in 1544 but was deprived under Queen Mary in 1554 because he had married.
<b>THOMAS CORKER</b>	was also Vicar of Rotherham and a chaplain to George, 6 <sup>th</sup> Earl of Shrewsbury, the custodian of Mary, Queen of Scots. He was removed from the benefice because of his complicity in the troubles over Mary Queen of Scots.
<b>WILLIAM &amp; JOHN CARTE</b>	were Puritans. John refused to conform to the Book of Common Prayer upon the return of Charles II. He was ejected but continued to live and teach in the parish for sometime.
<b>SAMUEL DRAKE</b>	fought for Charles I in the Civil War.
<b>CUTHBERT</b>	managed the Duke of Norfolk's Hallamshire Estates.
<b>BROWNE</b>	He became involved in the so-called 'Popish Plot' in 1678.
<b>FRANCIS LOCKIER</b>	was a chaplain to King George I. He is the only Rector known to have preached to the House of Commons. He became Dean of Peterborough, where he is buried. He endowed schools in the parish.
<b>PHILIP HOWARD</b>	was a relative of the Duke of Norfolk.
<b>WILLIAM ARTHUR BAKER</b>	was Archdeacon of Sheffield (1938-1943) and the only Rural Dean of Handsworth (1927-38).

# Windows

**C**LOURFUL stained-glass windows are a very common feature in churches of all ages across the world. When the majority of the population were unable to read or write, churches and cathedrals had to use different media of communicating the good news of Jesus. In older churches, you may see Christian stories depicted in carving in the brick or stone work, wall paintings, tapestries or embroideries. It was important that truths from Scripture and Stories of the Saints could be understood by all ages, and many of the story-telling methods reflected the leading ideas at the time.

Painting pictures in coloured glass not only has an artistic and theological purpose by telling stories, but the windows also let light in and keep the building watertight. Windows can be seen as worshipful; when the eye wanders around the building, the viewer is brought back to God through the images and text. Windows can also be in memory of someone or something such as a historical event; this is normally shown by an inscription thus giving them a personal, historical, artistic and theological meaning.



At the East end of church in the sanctuary above the high altar are three separate windows, all under the same canopy.

The left and right-hand windows depict the **agony of Gethsemane** and the middle one, the **Last Supper (a)**.

The cup refers to the Bible verse 'Father take this cup from me'.

On the south side of the chancel are three lancet windows. **The Annunciation (b)** is the proclamation from the Angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary: 'You shall conceive and bear a son and you shall call him Jesus.' The Annunciation is popular in Christian art as many places of worship are assigned its patronage. Particular images found are the lily, which represents Mary's purity and a closed book refers to the prophet Isaiah: 'All prophetic vision has come for you like a sealed book'.

**The Risen Lord (c)** shows Jesus standing on a door holding a banner of a red cross on a white background. The red cross depicts the death of Christ and the white background the shroud left behind after Our Lord's rising from the dead. You can see the wounds on his side from the piercing of the lance before he was crucified. The lily is also seen here as a symbol of the Resurrection. It is thought that lilies were growing in the Garden of Gethsemane at the time of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. Notice the rays from underneath Jesus' feet and that he is standing on a closed door crushing Satan.



**The Stable at Bethlehem (d)** shows the Holy Family.



The next window depicts two stories. On the left is **Joseph in his Dream (e)** when he was told of Jesus' birth by the angel Gabriel. Joseph's profession as a carpenter is shown by him holding a plane.; you can see nails and wood shavings. This window was designed in 1875 by Lavers & Westlake, pioneers of the Gothic Revival movement.

Saints Mary and Elizabeth are featured on the right side of the window depicting the **Visitation of Mary**, along with Zechariah (husband of Elizabeth) and Joseph. The visitation is of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. Above this scene are four angels holding objects: a viol, a lily, a stem of wheat and a harp.

The far left window on the south wall is entitled **The Whole Armour of God (f)** and is based on the biblical text of Ephesians 6, which is quoted at the bottom of the window. The three archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael are depicted carrying the Gospel armour: the belt of truth, the sword of the Spirit and the gospel slippers, as mentioned in the Bible passage. At the bottom there is the shield of faith, breastplate of righteousness and the helmet of salvation.

The middle window is of the **Three Theological Virtues (g)** – Faith, Charity and Hope. Faith is represented by holding a candle, Charity by carrying a child's flaming heart, and Hope by an anchor and someone looking out. The final window is of **The Epiphany (h)** and depicts the Holy Family with the Wise Men and ox and ass. This is unique in that it depicts a wise woman in the scene.



On the North wall, the first window is of **Our Lord teaching** and **The Holy Family at Work (i)**. The middle window is **Healing the Sick** and **Feeding the Hungry (j)** – two of the Corporal Works of Mercy.

The final window on the North wall is **Via Dolorosa (k)** (Way of the Sorrows) and **Calvary**. **Via Dolorosa** recalls the final moments of Jesus and Calvary pictures him on the cross beside his mother Mary and St John.





# The Windows in St Katherine's Chapel



*l) St Cuthbert & St Oswald*

are both saints from the North of England.

St Cuthbert is regarded as the patron saint of Northumbria and is one of the most famous medieval saints.

St Oswald was once King of Northumbria and restored Christianity there under the influence of Aidan of Lindisfarne.

*m) St Peter & St Paul*

St Peter is holding the keys to the kingdom of heaven that are described in Matthew's Gospel.

The sword that St Paul is holding symbolizes his martyrdom as he was beheaded.



*n) St Katherine of Alexandria & St Margaret of Antioch, with Mary*

St Katherine was tortured to death. The spiked wheel that was used to kill her broke when she touched it - a Catherine wheel.

St Margaret was eaten by a dragon disguised as Satan, but his stomach refused her and let her out unharmed.

# Shields

SOMETIMES described as ‘the shorthand of history’, heraldry can outline the story of places by presenting the arms of the families who were influential in the area, or who resided there, and the emblems of their activities.

The Right of Presentation to the Benefice of Handsworth belonged to the Paynel family when the church was built and the arms of the patrons are above the south arcade and wall.



Paynel



Lovetot



De Furnival



Nevil



Talbot



Howard

Whenever the Dukes of Norfolk (Howard Family) were Roman Catholic, the patronage was exercised by Cambridge University; until 1929 when it was sold privately to Handsworth Parochial Church Council. In 1933 the patronage was transferred to the Sheffield Diocesan Board of Patronage.

## The Ordinaries

The Ordinary exercises ecclesiastical jurisdiction. This is usually the Bishop, but Handsworth was a royal “peculiar” in the jurisdiction of the Dean & Chapter of York, under the Prebend of Laughton (the Chancellor of York). Reports were always sent to Laughton annually. Most “peculiar” were abolished in 1830. Handsworth came under the Archbishop of York until 1914, when the first Bishop of Sheffield was enthroned. The Bishop of Sheffield is now the patron.



The Dean & Chapter of York  
(1170-1201 until 1830)



The Archbishop of York  
(1830-1914)



The Bishop of Sheffield  
(1914-present)

## Other Notable Families



Foliot



Stacye



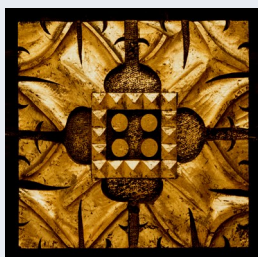
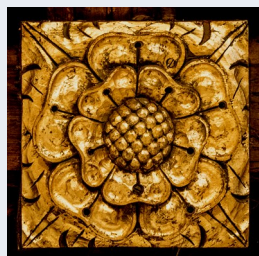
Scrope

# Nave Roof Bosses

If you stand in the Nave and look up, you will see a number of carved and gilded bosses on the roof. These are often found in medieval churches and cathedrals, and are typical examples of Gothic architecture that supports the crossing ribs of the ceiling. Images of foliage were very common in stone bosses, and pictorial images such as figures, symbols and heraldry appeared more frequently in the 15th century. Tudor symbols include the Tudor Rose and a portcullis.

## Looking East along the middle of the roof:

- IHS – a tetragram for the first three Greek letters of the name of Jesus
- The Talbot dog – the emblem of the Earls of Shrewsbury
- Key surmounted by a sword – representing St Peter & St Paul, the designated Saints of Sheffield Cathedral, then Sheffield Parish Church



## Looking West from the chancel:

- 8-point silver star – used as a badge by the Lords of Richmond & Scrope family
- Red with gold arrow – representing the intermarriages between the Talbot and Beauchamp families e.g. Margaret Beauchamp in 1442



# More of Handsworth

**The Chantry (formerly The Cross Keys)** public house is unique as it lies within consecrated ground, in the churchyard of St Mary's, one of two such pubs in England. When it was originally built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, it was used as a church house for the chaplains and lay clerks attached to the church. Simon Foliot, the first known Rector, had two assistants and by 1535 this had increased to five. During the Reformation, they lost their livings and the house was taken from them along with their belongings.



After the Reformation, the house was converted into a school referred to as 'one public school, not endowed, nor otherwise maintained' in 1743. Forty children were taught there and were instructed in the principles of the Christian religion until 1800 when a new school was built across the road.

The building was sold to the parish clerk for £43. It was sold again in 1823 and was granted an ale licence, and named 'The Cross Keys'. This is most likely because crossed keys were the symbol of the Dean & Chapter of York, as the grounds came under the jurisdiction of York in ecclesiastical matters. In medieval times, crossed keys were a sign of sanctuary as they represent the keys of St Peter, the keys to heaven. It has recently opened under the new name of 'The Chantry'.

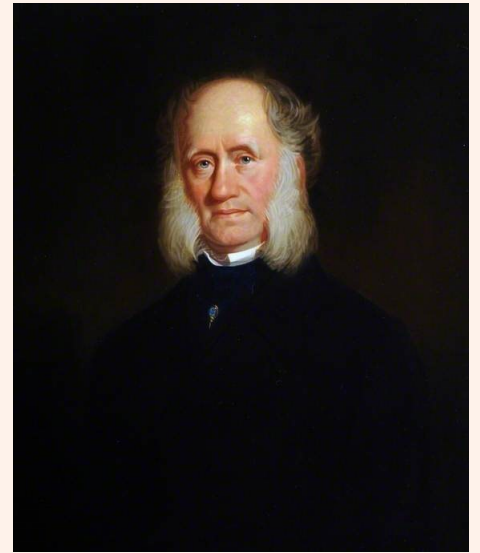
**The Old Rectory** behind the church is now a community hub and is popular for weddings, as well as being St Mary's Parish Centre. Extended in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, it has foundations that are nearly as old as the church. It was originally a timber framed building, some of which can still be seen. A section of the original wattle and daub wall is on display in the



During the late-seventeenth or early-eighteenth centuries, the Rector decided to build a larger and more modern house at the East End in Georgian style. Shortly afterwards, a wing complementary to the East Wing was added and the Tudor timber-framed buildings were pulled down – some were incorporated into the new building. Apart from the coach-house and the stable block, all outhouses dating pre-Georgian were removed.

## The Jeffcock Family

The first Mayor of Sheffield in 1843 was **William Jeffcock**, who was born in 1800 and is buried in the family vault at St Mary's. His family were prominent, wealthy and respectable local figures. The Jeffcock family were from Eckington, Derbyshire, but settled in Handsworth in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. William's father, John, established the family name as coal masters by becoming the Colliery Engineer at Dore House Colliery in Handsworth. This enabled William to build upon his father's commercial success by entering the realm of government and he was elected the leader of the Attercliffe Ward in 1843. In St Mary's churchyard, there are two box tombs in memory of over two dozen members of the Jeffcock family, as well as additional tributes in the church. At the junction of Richmond Road is a water fountain in memory of William Jeffcock.



**Benjamin Huntsman** lived in Handsworth in the 1740s and is known for inventing **crucible steel**. His discovery enabled Sheffield to grow from a small town into one of the leading northern industrial cities that helped shape Victorian Britain. Huntsman developed a process whereby it became possible to melt down raw or 'blister' steel and produce cast ingots of steel. This process needed temperatures of 1600 degrees - something which had not been achieved before in the industry. Huntsman used coke instead of charcoal in his furnace to reach these extreme temperatures. The steel was contained in a clay crucible which could withstand the heat and the possible attack of the metal.

## Sword Dancing

A famous custom in Handsworth is Sword Dancing. The origins of this historical ritual are unknown and it is possible that they lie in pre-Christian Paganism. Using long steel swords, a team of eight men perform a dance lasting around nine minutes and ending with all swords being interlocked and held upward by one man. Traditional music is played and the dancers wear a military-style uniform similar to the dragoons. In addition, two clowns perform for the crowd and collect money. During the Christmas season, the dancers would tour the local villages and public houses – the tradition of dancing on Boxing Day outside St Mary's was revived in 1963.



# Church Life



*Teddy Bear Parachute Drop & Family Picnic for Father's Day*

*Baptism at the font*



*Messy Church*



*Blessing of the Fire at the Easter Vigil*



*Christmas Celebrations*



*Pentecost Celebrations*



*The re-opening of The Chantry Pub*

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