



THE CHURCHES  
CONSERVATION TRUST



# HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

Privett, Hampshire



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£1.50

*Privett, Hampshire*

# HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

*by Philip Exton*



Privett church is a 19th-century replacement of a small medieval building, the chancel of which stood where now rises the commanding tower and spire of Holy Trinity. Buildings comparable with its predecessor can still be seen at Priors Dean and Colemore. The place name derives from 'privet copse'.

The impetus for the creation of the present church came from the Nicholson family, famous as distillers. They lived in Basing Park, now demolished.

Sir Arthur Blomfield was architect, and the church was built between 1876 and 1878. It cost £22,000. There have been no significant alterations since. It consists of a four-bay nave with aisles and clerestory, transepts, an unaisled chancel, and the magnificent tower and spire 160ft (48.8m) high. There is a north porch. The style is that of the 13th century, with simple lancet windows but more elaboration on the tower and spire and interior.

*Front cover: Interior looking east*

*Left: Exterior from the south-east*



The resources available gave an opportunity for the production of a 'medieval' church, in accordance with the philosophy of the time. To today's visitor it is a Victorian church, and characteristic of the best of them. Scale and proportion (particularly of the arcades and tower) create an effect of stateliness, while the colour of the interior stone (from the Ham Hill and the Bath quarries with a telling band of pink Corsehill stone round the walls) gives a warmth which might otherwise be lacking. The builders were Dove Brothers of Islington.

The original fittings are of a quality to match the structure and would have been made by craftsmen chosen by Blomfield, often to his designs. Messrs Farmer and Brindley provided the stonecarvings, such as the elaborate reredos. The font is of Mansfield stone. Most of the stained glass is by Heaton, Butler and Bayne. The Italian marble mosaic floors are an outstanding feature of the building. Two ladies of the Nicholson family gave the original altar

cloth, which was worked in Belgium. There is a notable ring of eight bells, cast in 1877 by Mears and Stainbank of Whitechapel.

As the church was built only in 1876–78 there are few monuments. In the south aisle is one to G M Nicholson, who died while trying to rescue a workman overcome by foul air at the distillery. Those to members of the Parry family under the tower were evidently retained from the earlier church. Caroline Martineau was a sister of Admiral Parry, the Arctic explorer.

Sir Arthur Blomfield (1829–99) was a typical Victorian church architect. Son of the Bishop of London, he later designed another large church in Hampshire, St Mary Portsea (1887–89). He is not one of those whose work has been increasingly appreciated in recent years. However at Holy Trinity, Privett, he had ample resources for structure and fittings and no need to accommodate any part of the former church. He rose to the occasion.

With the Nicholsons gone, the disparity between the size of the church and the needs and resources of the parish had led, by the 1960s, to a retreat to the south transept. From this time onwards the fine organ, the pews and some other fittings were disposed of. Subsequently the church was declared redundant, and a period of uncertainty was ended when in November 1980 it was vested in the Redundant Churches Fund, now The Churches Conservation Trust.

Repairs, particularly to the steeply-pitched tiled roofs, have been carried out for the Trust by Messrs R J Smith & Co. of Whitchurch under the direction initially of Thomas K Makins, FRIBA, architect of Portsmouth, and more recently Louise Bainbridge, RIBA, of Winchester.



*Left: The nave roof looking west*

*Right: The pulpit*

# THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION TRUST

The Churches Conservation Trust is the national charity that cares for and preserves English churches of historic, architectural or archaeological importance that are no longer needed for regular worship. It promotes public enjoyment of them and their use as an educational and community resource. In 2009 the Trust celebrates 40 years of saving historic churches at risk.

There are over 340 Trust churches scattered widely through the length and breadth of England, in town and country, ranging from ancient, rustic buildings to others of great richness and splendour; each tells a unique story of people and place. All are worth visiting.

Many churches are open all year round, others have keyholders nearby; entry is free to all. A notice explaining opening arrangements or keyholders will normally be found at the church. Such information can also be obtained from the Trust during office hours.

We strongly recommend checking our website [www.visitchurches.org.uk](http://www.visitchurches.org.uk) for the most up to date opening and access details and directions.

Visitors are most welcome and we hope this guidebook will encourage you to explore these wonderful buildings.

*Historic churches, due to their age and previous use, often have uneven and worn floors. Please take care, especially in wet weather when floors and steps can also be slippery.*

## MAKING A DONATION

Your donation, no matter how small, will enable The Churches Conservation Trust to save more historic churches across England. If you would like to make a contribution, please use a Gift Aid envelope located at the church you visit, see our website [www.visitchurches.org.uk](http://www.visitchurches.org.uk), or contact our fundraising team on 020 7213 0673.

## NEARBY ARE THE TRUST CHURCHES OF

St Peter ad Vincula, Colemore  
6 miles S of Alton off A32

St Mary, Itchen Stoke  
6 miles E of Winchester on B3047

St Mary the Virgin Old Church, Preston Candover  
9 miles S of Basingstoke on B3046

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*Right: Chancel showing the east window and reredos  
Back cover: The font of Mansfield stone*

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