

KS2

READING
MUSEUM
HANDS ON
LEARNING



Holy Trinity Church

Early History

- The Church was built in 1826 as a proprietary Chapel by Reverend George Holm of Shinfield
- The architect, Edward Garbett, also designed the Theale Parish Church, which was constructed around the same time
- On the 20th of August 1832, the building was consecrated by Thomas Burgess, the Bishop of Sarum
- In 1845, the building was given its current high-pitched roof and façade by John Billing, a local architect and builder
- William Fox Talbot, the English inventor of photography, took a photo of this façade, so it is possible this was the first church to ever be photographed
- In 1864, Holy Trinity became a Chapel-of-Ease for the parish of St. Mary the Virgin (a chapel situated for the convenience of parishioners living a long way from the parish church)
- In 1870, the parish of Reading Most Holy Trinity was constituted, with its territory being taken from the parish of St. Mary's Church

Architecture

- The Church is a Grade 2 listed building, which was first listed on the 14th of December 1978
- The exterior is plain brick with:
 - An octagonal belfry with a spirelet (a small spire) corbelled out (jutting out to support then structure)
 - Three stepped lancets (tall narrow windows)
 - Three arched doors
 - Side buttresses
 - 4 bath stone piers on the street wall

Façade

The Holy Trinity Church Façade. Note the belfry at the top of the church, the lancets in the middle and the three arched doorways at the bottom. You can also see the four bath stones along the wall.



Interior

- While the outside of the building may be considered simple, the inside is spacious and unique
- In the main body of the church is a statue of Our Lady of Walsingham, where people stop to offer their prayers to Our Lady
- Much of the interior was acquired by Parish Priest Canon Brian Brindley, such as:
 - The Queen Anne Pulpit, rescued from All Saints, Oxford
 - The large High Altar, made from black and white marble by local stone masons
 - Solid Oak pews from St Philip and St James, Oxford

Church Vaults

Reverend E. O. Gittens, a former priest at Holy Trinity Church in the church vaults, September 1939



Catacombs

Holy Trinity Church was the last built church in Reading to have burial vaults (catacombs) before they were outlawed



Catacombs (continued)

These vaults were created from chalk pits underneath the church



Air Raid Shelter

In WWII, the catacombs were used as air raid shelters for several hundred people.

There were a series of rules to follow while the vaults were being used as an air raid shelter:

1. Smoking was strictly prohibited
2. Animals, including pets, were not allowed in the shelter
3. The entrance had to be kept clear
4. The shelter was not intended for people who had their own domestic shelters in the vicinity



Record keeping

Each tunnel has a number at the top of their entrance to make any records of what is within the vaults clear.



Sources

Slide 2: <https://web.archive.org/web/20120630163615/http://www.holytrinityreading.org.uk/section/5>; John Dearing (2013): The Reading Book of Days. The History Press Ltd., UK

Slide 3: <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113550>

Slide 5: <https://web.archive.org/web/20120630163615/http://www.holytrinityreading.org.uk/section/5>;
<https://www.explorechurches.org/church/most-holy-trinity-reading>

Slide 6:

<http://collections.readingmuseum.org.uk/index.asp?page=record&mwsquery={search}={holy%20trinity}&filename=REDMG&hitsStart=2>; John Dearing (2013): The Reading Book of Days. The History Press Ltd., UK

Slide 7:

<http://collections.readingmuseum.org.uk/index.asp?page=record&mwsquery={search}={holy%20trinity}&filename=REDMG&hitsStart=2>

Slides 8-11: Ford, H (2017): Callum Cromwell's images underneath Reading

<https://www.getreading.co.uk/news/reading-berkshire-news/gallery/callum-cromwells-images-underneath-reading-13659719>