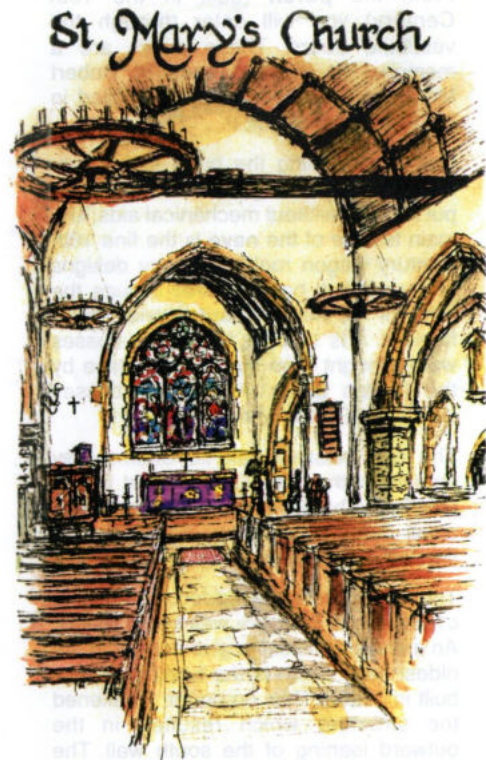


St. Mary's Church Billingshurst W. Sussex



Welcome to St. Mary's Parish Church set firmly on a hill overlooking the Roman Road – Stane Street.
This Church has been a place of worship for over 800 years.

Please come inside
Let us share with you the treasures of our rich inheritance!



..... yes, come inside where the busy world is hushed and tranquility, peace, warmth and love prevail.

Many comment on the special atmosphere experienced here. Perhaps it's not such a mystery. Is it the beautifully arranged flowers; the warmth of the people; or the evidence everywhere of centuries of care and stewardship?

Many return to our church some for a lifetime!

From the **porch** (built in the 16th Century) you will enter through the vestibule doors. These doors are a memorial to the two sons of Robert Morris of Five Oaks who were killed in the First World War.

It is worth noting the huge stone floor slabs and wondering just how these were put in place without mechanical aids. The main feature of the **nave** is the fine 16th Century wagon roof with many designs of carved oak bosses. They include the arms of the Percy, Beaufort and Neville families. It is thought that these bosses were brought from some other place by the Garton family. Two of the bosses depict the Garton arms.

The two massive oak tie beams may date from the 13th Century. Set in the paving is a brass memorial (covered by a small carpet) to Thomas and Elizabeth Bartlett of Okehurst, dated 1499.

The **south aisle** was added, probably in c1280, when the nave was being rebuilt. An archway was cut to give access to the oldest part, which is the **Lady Chapel** - built in c1230. This, no doubt, weakened the structure which resulted in the outward leaning of the south wall. The original door and two lancet windows still remain in this 'leaning wall'.

The **north aisle** was added in 1430 and leads to the north chapel - built in 1866 - used now as a vestry.

Other interesting features include the wagon wheel candelabra, brought recently, from the Ukraine.

The **stained glass windows** are worthy of close study. They are, mostly, 19th century, but a small piece of glass from mediaeval times was found in 1866 and set into a window in the south aisle.

The **east window** is truly magnificent. It depicts the major events in the life of Jesus. On the left His birth in a stable is portrayed. The centre light shows Jesus's crucifixion. The three women are Mary, the mother of Jesus, Mary Cleopas and, with the long blonde hair, Mary of Magdala.

The right light depicts Jesus at supper just before His crucifixion. Judas, with his money-bag firmly clasped, is just leaving to betray Jesus.

In the **south aisle** an angel is telling Mary of Magdala that Jesus is risen from the dead. At the western end of this aisle Joseph and Mary present Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem. The old man is Simeon, whom we thank for the lovely Nunc Dimittis.

In the **north aisle** a beautiful window shows Jesus with Martha and Mary at their home in Bethany. He is listening to Martha's complaint that she isn't getting any help from Mary with the domestic chores!

This window is a memorial to Mrs. Berrall.

In the **Lady Chapel** Jesus is shown as a child engaging the learned theologians in serious debate. The right hand light shows Jesus blessing the children.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated team of bell-ringers. Their talents ensure our continuing enjoyment of the marvellous peal of eight bells – one of the best in West Sussex.

The calls to worship and other special occasions are greatly enriched by this traditional sound.

Our churchyard is large and lovingly tended. It is closed for burials simply because people have lived - and died - here for a long time. Naturally the space has been filled. However, there is a peaceful Garden of Remembrance for the interment of ashes.

It is interesting to note that, in 1520, the churchyard included four lock-up shops rented to a butcher, a carpenter, a shoemaker and a weaver. In 1600, one of the shops was rented to a bell founder.

Our records include churchwardens' accounts which are among the earliest in Sussex – dating from 1520. Registers of baptisms and marriages also date from the 16th century and are still carefully maintained at the Diocesan Record Office.

Please contact our friendly and helpful office staff for further details.

**The Parish Church of St. Mary
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
Deanery of Horsham
and Diocese of Chichester**

**PART OF THE WORLDWIDE
ANGLICAN COMMUNITY**