

Church of All Saints, Hollybush, Worcestershire

All Saints, Hollybush was built in 1869 as a chapel within the parish of Castlemorton. Hollybush, at the extreme southern end of the Malvern Hills and on the border of three dioceses, Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire, was both extremely remote, and very poor.

It was built very cheaply, thanks to donations of money from local benefactors, and gifts of common land from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, of stone from the Eastnor estate (courtesy of Lord Somers), and the hard labour of local farm-workers who pulled the stone from the quarries to the chapel site. The builder was a Mr Smart.

The following extract from the Worcester Journal, describing the benediction of the newly constructed chapel at Hollybush gives an idea of the remote and impoverished situation of the area.

Extract from the *Worcester Journal* - Saturday 6 November 1869

BENEDICTION OF HOLLYBUSH CHAPEL, CASTLEMORTON.

It often happens that places most favoured by nature are neglected by man, and districts which are famed for pictorial beauty and the lavish endowments of Providence are left deserted by all moral and religious aids. Such was till of late the district of "The Hollybush", near the southern terminus of the Malvern range of hills. It requires a more facile pen than ours to describe the extreme beauty of this secluded locality, which is second to none of the far-famed Worcestershire landscapes.

...

The plateau of "The Palatine Plains," or breast of "The Hollybush," is formed by nature for terraces of houses, and already one can fancy the winding glens of the Ragged Stone dotted with villas. The beautiful seclusion of the district has already been broken into by the spade of the "navvy," as the railway projected from Monmouth through the Forest of Dean to Worcester will pass through Berrow, and a station is to be erected near the Bye Cross. But now for the shadows of this beautiful picture.

The parish or chapelry of Castlemorton extending about six square miles, its extremity at the Hollybush is distant three miles from the parish church, and the boundaries of the adjoining parishes of Berrow, Eastnor, Bromsberrow, and Birtsmorton, terminating in the same district, a long way from any church, no opportunity was afforded the poor cottagers of attending divine worship. Moreover, as the Hollybush is the boundary where meet the three dioceses of Worcester, Hereford, Gloucester and Bristol, there could hardly be said to be any episcopal supervision; spiritual life at such geographical extremities was scarcely manifested at all; it was a sort of "no man's" land, save one large and two small farms, and the poor cottagers were as sheep having no shepherd.

Can it be a source of wonder, then, that a district lying so open to attack by the powers of evil should

have been selected a few years ago by the Mormons, who made a raid upon it and carried off thirty families to the Salt Lake! Perhaps this catastrophe was the best thing that could have happened, as it at once bestirred the church people of the neighbourhood to a sense of their duty, and an effort was made to amend the condition of these poor people.

Open-air and cottage services were at length performed here by the Rev. A. Wood, curate of Castlemorton, and Rev. E. Ashfield, of Berrow, when from seventy to ninety persons usually attended. Other agencies were also set to work to remedy this spiritual destitution. Miss Selwyn, of Glenberrow, who owns some property near, took a deep interest in the matter, and almost unaided set about raising funds for the erection of a chapel of ease. Mr. Preedy¹ estimated the cost of a very humble structure at £500. **The Ecclesiastical Commissioners, as lords of the manor, gave half an acre of the common for a site, and Earl Somers promised the stone.** The Diocesan Society gave £50, and a friend, who wished to remain unknown, not only gave another £50 but promised a further donation if funds could be raised for a school. The Incorporated Society gave £30, and the Church Extension Society £15.

The little church is a simple and unpretending structure in the Early English style, built of stone quarried in the neighbourhood and which was hauled gratuitously by the farmers. The building is a plain parallelogram or oblong, with bell-cot at the west end and a porch at the south-west angle; and the number of sittings is about ninety. [The] roof [is] tiled and steeply-pitched, with ornamental ridge-tiles, and floriated crosses on the gables. The porch is

¹ Frederick Preedy (1820-1898), architect and stained glass artist, of Evesham. A Worcestershire man, Preedy designed and restored over 60 churches, and many more windows, many in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. For further information, see Wikipedia URL: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Preedy (accessed 29 May 2015)

particularly good, having solid walls, lighted on each side by a quatre-foil opening, glazed. The windows in the side walls have single and double lights ; in the west wall is a rose window of five circles surrounding a cinquefoil, and a lancet light on each side of it . A memorial three-light window of stained glass, by Preedy, has been inserted at the east end. Its subjects are the Taking from the Cross, the Ascension, and the *Noli me tangere* or appearance to Mary in the Garden.

In the tracery of the head are angels playing on musical instruments. At the base is the following inscription : "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.— To the glory of God, and in memory of Townsend and Charlotte Selwyn, this window is dedicated by their affectionate sister and daughter, Catherine, Countess of Beauchamp, and Mary Selwyn, AD 1869". The roof of the chapel is of open timber work, its principals resting on corbels, beautifully carved with conventional foliage, or moulded.

In the north wall of the chancel is a piscina, the basin of which rests on a bracket similarly carved. There is no reredos, but its place is supplied by a rich crimson cloth powdered with fleurs de lis, and hanging from a handsome brass rod. Encaustic tiles of exceedingly good patterns are laid on the floor.

The seats are open, massive, but movable, of varnished deal. The furniture and appointments of the chancel, lectern, metal standards for candles, &c, were for the most part contributed by the Church Extension Society, an institution which is quietly doing much good in this way.

Creation of new parish and dedication of church, 1912

In 1912, Hollybush became a parish in its own right, independent of Castlemorton, and on 11 April 1912, the chapel was consecrated and re-dedicated as the Church of All Saints, Hollybush².

Extension of church, 1928

In October 1928, plans were drawn up for an extension to the sanctuary and vestry of All Saints Church. The architects were Nicholson & Clarke of Cathedral Chambers, Hereford. Permission was granted the following year.

The accompanying specification, written by the architects in 1928, describes the stone to be used in great detail:

"...Taking down: Carefully take down the reredos and lay aside for re-use. Take up the altar steps and lay aside for re-use. Take down the present piscina and lay aside for re-use. Take out the glass from the present East and Vestry windows and carefully store aside for re-use. Take down the East wall of the chapel and Vestry stacking all stones for re-use, and marking the quoins, windows, copings, etc...

MASON

² Sentence of Consecration, 11 April 1912. Hollybush Parochial Box, Diocese of Worcester Registry (held at Worcestershire Archives & Archaeology Service. Permission to view the contents of this box must be granted by the Diocesan Registrar)

A beautiful cloth for the altar table was worked by Miss Selwyn, and the gilt candlesticks were the gift of Miss East. On the table were lovely bouquets of flowers, and a cross formed of chrysanthemum blooms. On each side of the east window, on the wall, were emblems of the Trinity, in leaves and flowers. The string-course which bisects the east wall was decorated with foliage and berries, as were also the corbels of the walls and sanctuary furniture, which the tasteful and loving hands of Mrs. Hill, of Bromsberrow Rectory, and Miss Selwyn had rendered most beautiful with wreaths and spiral adornments.

The chapel is warmed with a hot water apparatus, and seems in every way complete, commodious, and fitting for Divine worship. A brass plate has been prepared to be affixed to a prominent part of the chapel, with the following inscription :— " This chapel, built by subscription, and dedicated to All Saints, was opened Nov. 3, 1869. I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.'

Mr. Smart, of Malvern Wells, was the builder, and deserves much credit for his work.

[There follows a lengthy description of the dedication service, and lists of those officiating and attending, hymns sung, prayers and sermons read etc]

Stone: The new stone to be of the best selected stone from quarries on the Eastnor estate and to be hard sound, free from all imperfections and to be laid on its natural and quarry bed unless otherwise directed. The stonework is to be well cleaned down at completion and every stone is to be well bedded with complete full squeezed out joints.

The Hollington³ stone and other dressings to be set in fine Masons' mortar and the walling in cement with pointing to match existing.

The elevations are to be in Beaconhill⁴ stone laid in random coursed rock faced shoddies and the internal thicknesses of walls with stone from the Hollybush quarry.

East end wall: Rebuild the existing stonework of the East walls of the Church and Vestry including windows, gable etc and provide new copper dowels, cramps etc required. Properly reset the plinths, copings and quoins.

Window: The new window on the North side to be in best selected Hollington stone from approved quarries, and to match the window of the Vestry in every respect. except that the internal jambs are to be splayed. The vertical joints of the sill to have double cement and mortices for same. Finish on inside with arch to match other window and with splayed sill...

Piscina: Refix the existing piscina in new position. Form splayed arch over same in **light red Hollington stone...**

Steps: Provide and fix an 18" x 6" hard York stone step from Choir to Sanctuary set and jointed in cement rubbed on top and front sides, to be in long lengths with find joints and double cement plugs. Refix the existing steps to the Altar table....

Plinth: Provide and fix **light red Hollington** splayed plinth where shown to new walls to match existing.

Corbels: Provide No.2 20" x 15" light red **Hollington stone corbels** to truss to match existing.

TILER

Tiling: Cover the new roofs with first quality burnt sanded tiles of approved manufacture and to match existing tiles for colour with nibs and laid to a similar gauge as existing, hung to 2" x 1" red deal battens, bedded with a pat of lime and hair mortar and nailed to every three courses with two copper nails to each tile...

Ridge: Provide and fix ornamental blue ridge crests bedded in hair mortar and jointed in cement.

PAVING

[Encaustic?] Tile paving: Lay the floors of Sanctuary and around altar table with 4 x 4" best quality tiles p.c. 24/-- per yard with borders of 3" tiles as at present. The tiles to be well wetted and laid with close open joints...

...Lay floor of Vestry with 6 x 6" red tiles to match existing

Gangway: Lay the gangway between the choir seats with sound old tiles taken up from the present Chancel...

All of this information is contained in the Hollybush Parochial Box, property of the diocese of Worcester. To reproduce the image, or to access the archive materials, you will need the permission of the Diocesan Registrar. The box is held by Worcestershire Archives and Archaeology Service, The Hive, Worcester.

Report compiled by

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³ stone from Hollington quarries, Staffordshire

⁴ This could be a reference to Aymestry Limestone, the type of stone quarried at Beacon Hill in Sedgely, near Dudley, Worcs. This type of limestone is also found in quarries near Ledbury. We are awaiting the results of a site visit before we can confirm this,

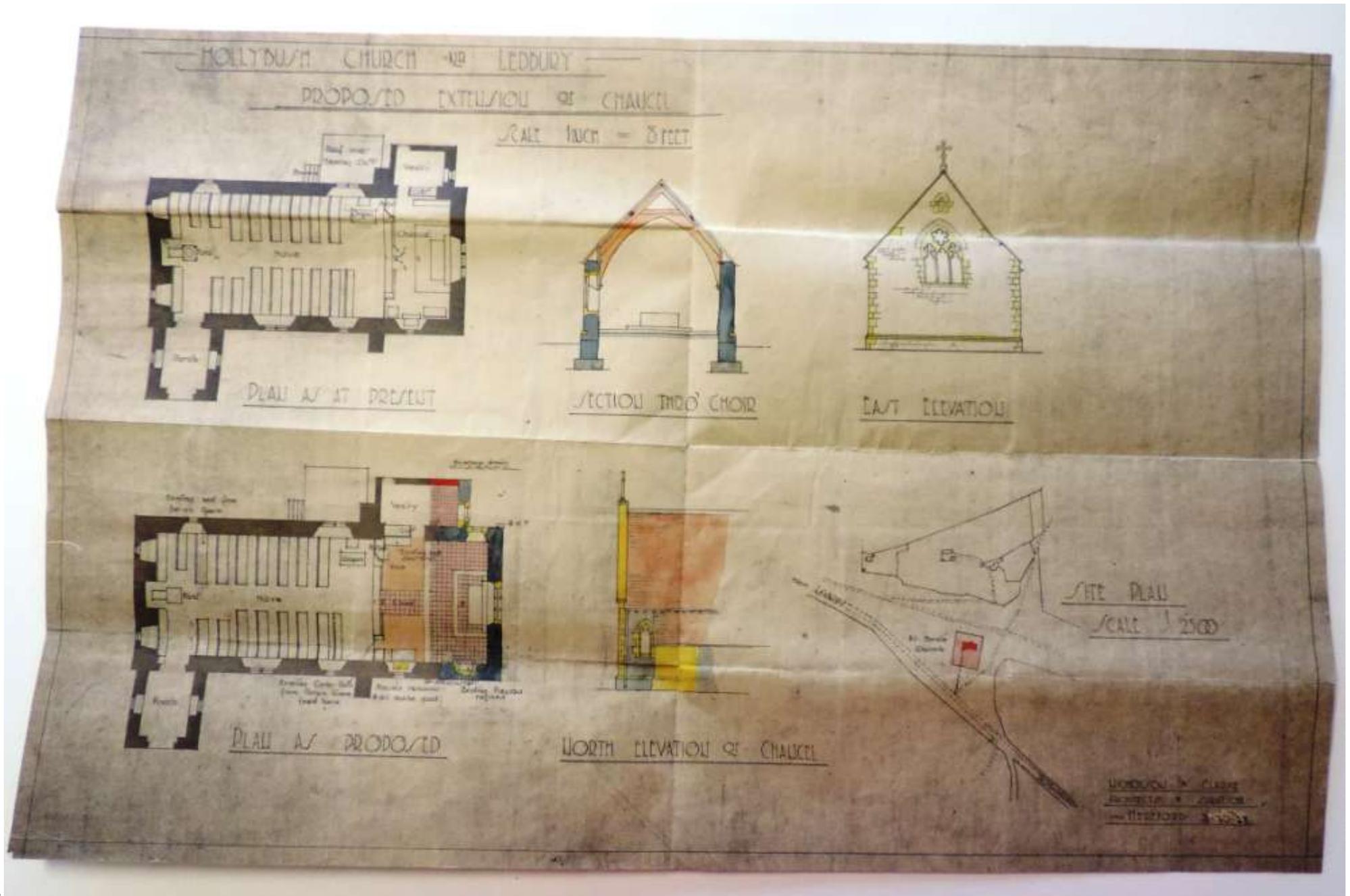


Figure 1 - Architect's drawings for extension of All Saints, Hollybush. Prepared by Nicholson & Clarke, architects, of Cathedral Chambers, Hereford, 30 Oct 1929 (Hollybush Parochial Box