

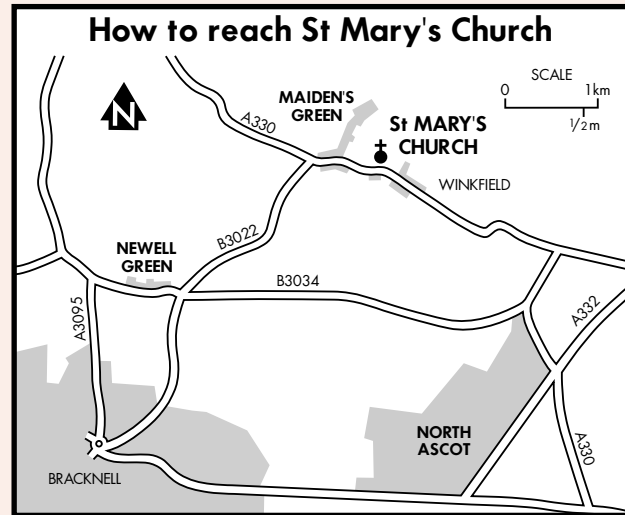


BRACKNELL FOREST WINKFIELD THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST MARY'S



COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE

**YOUR
LOCAL
HERITAGE**



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Visiting St Mary's Church

You are very welcome to visit St Mary's Church and the door is usually unlocked. If you would like to worship here, services are as follows:

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 2nd and 4th Sundays | 8am Holy Communion |
| 1st and 3rd Sundays | 11am Holy Communion |
| 2nd Sunday | 11am Family service |
| 4th Sunday | 11am Morning prayer |

The Vicarage number is 01344 882322.

Leaflets also available for The Parish Church of All Saints, Binfield, and The Parish Church of St Michael the Archangel, Warfield.

**Leisure Services
Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Time Square Market Street
Bracknell Berkshire RG12 1LR
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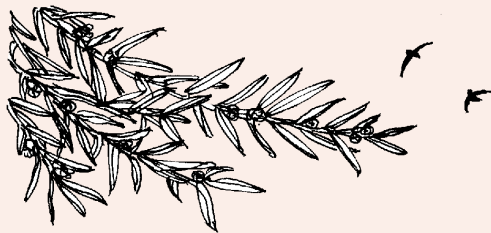
text and illustration by Linda Carter

**This leaflet is available in large print, braille, or on audio tape
on request, please contact 01344 354124 for further details**

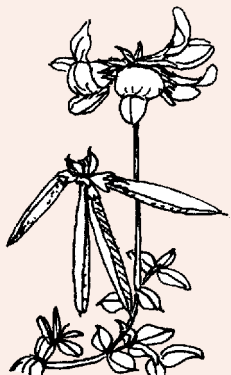
The churchyard is a remnant of flowery meadow once found everywhere, with its Lady's bedstraw (Our Lady's bedstraw), Germander speedwell (Angel's eyes), Buttercups (Mary buds), Black knapweed, Bird's-foot trefoil and Selfheal. The grasses are valuable, too, for breeding butterflies. Meadow brown and Ringlet may be seen fluttering across the churchyard in July.

The lovely mosaic of colour produced by lichens covers the older tombstones all year. Some lichens may be almost as old as the monuments they inhabit.

The oldest living organism is the veteran yew tree behind the church. Its girth exceeds 17 feet and showers of pollen drift away on the wind in late winter. The yew in front of the church is probably its progeny, and the view of the churchyard is framed by the massive limbs of the Cedar.



Yew



**Bird's-foot Trefoil
'God Almighty's
thumb and finger'**

WINKFIELD

Deep in the Forest, when people were few, Saxon settlers came. They called this place Winkfield, cleared the woodland and cultivated their fields. Christianity came in the seventh century and survived the ravages of the pagan Danes, to give the unbroken tradition of Christian worship to this day.

THE CHURCH OUTSIDE

Christian worship in Berkshire was already six centuries old when the middle section of the present church was built towards the end of the 1200s. With no local stone to cut for building blocks, the masons of the Middle Ages made the walls of rubble bonded with lime mortar, and faced them with pebbly ironstone, collected from the heathland. The single window to the left of the porch is original, as are two of the three north wall windows. Further along, the walls are faced with split, or knapped, flint. These date from the 16th century onwards.



Ironstone conglomerate

Local red bricks

Knapped (split) flint

The commanding red brick bell tower was erected in 1629 - it is inscribed - to replace the old wooden belfry that stood close by. The local brick industry, that brought wealth to the area for centuries, was thriving and the tower was constructed from warm orange-red bricks made from the London Clay. Inside there is a spiral staircase leading to the clock mechanism and, on the uppermost floor, the bellchamber with a ring of six bells dated from 1597 to 1874.

THE CHURCH INSIDE

Under the 13th century chalkstone arch and inside the building, you are in the people's part of the Church, the nave. In 1592 Elizabeth I gave one of the great octagonal oak pillars that support the twin roofs and in 1887 Queen Victoria gave another from Windsor Forest. Winkfield is the only Church in Berkshire to have such pillars down the centre - the bane of brides coming down the aisle!

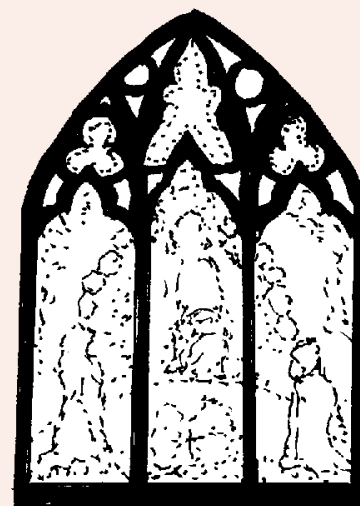
The nave is very plain. During The Reformation of the 1530s, when Henry VIII became Head of the Church, many 'abominations' were removed and the Royal Arms displayed. There is such a board of George III over the main door. Then the Church underwent major alterations in the 1590s. Furthermore, Windsor Forest people were strongly Parliamentary during the Civil War of the 1640s, when any remaining statuary and stained glass would have been destroyed. Only a brass plaque to Thos. Montague, died 1630, remains behind the pulpit. When the Monarchy was restored, Charles II came to the throne. There is a finely carved memorial to his master mason, Thomas Wise, dated 1685, a curiosity in a Church with so little masonry.



The winged soul of Thomas Wise Esq.

The font for christenings, near the south door, was designed by F. Bentley, architect of Westminster Cathedral, when he was in his early twenties. It is in ornate 'High Victorian' style, combining elements from many artistic traditions.

The chancel, or altar end, of the Church was rebuilt in 1858. G.E. Street, a renowned Victorian architect, designed it in the Gothic style of the Middle Ages. The chancel is suffused with light from the stained glass window depicting Christ in Majesty. There is also an attractive window in the south chapel, by C. Kempe, depicting The Nativity. The 19th century was a time of huge population growth and personal giving to the Church. This wealth is reflected in the redesign of the chancel by H Woodyer in 1888. The use of different materials by craftsmen is fully celebrated in the red brown-and-buff wall tiles, the stone carving of The Last Supper, the highly decorative basin, or piscina, for washing the Communion vessels, the carved wooden furniture and the iron screen with its tall candlesticks, all designed to draw attention to the altar with its fine embroideries and adornments.



The Chancel window: Christ in Majesty

THE CHURCHYARD AND WILDLIFE

St Mary's churchyard is a place for quiet reflection, the many monuments marking burials and flowery grassland giving it a special tranquil atmosphere as you pass through the lych gate, provided by the Blane family.