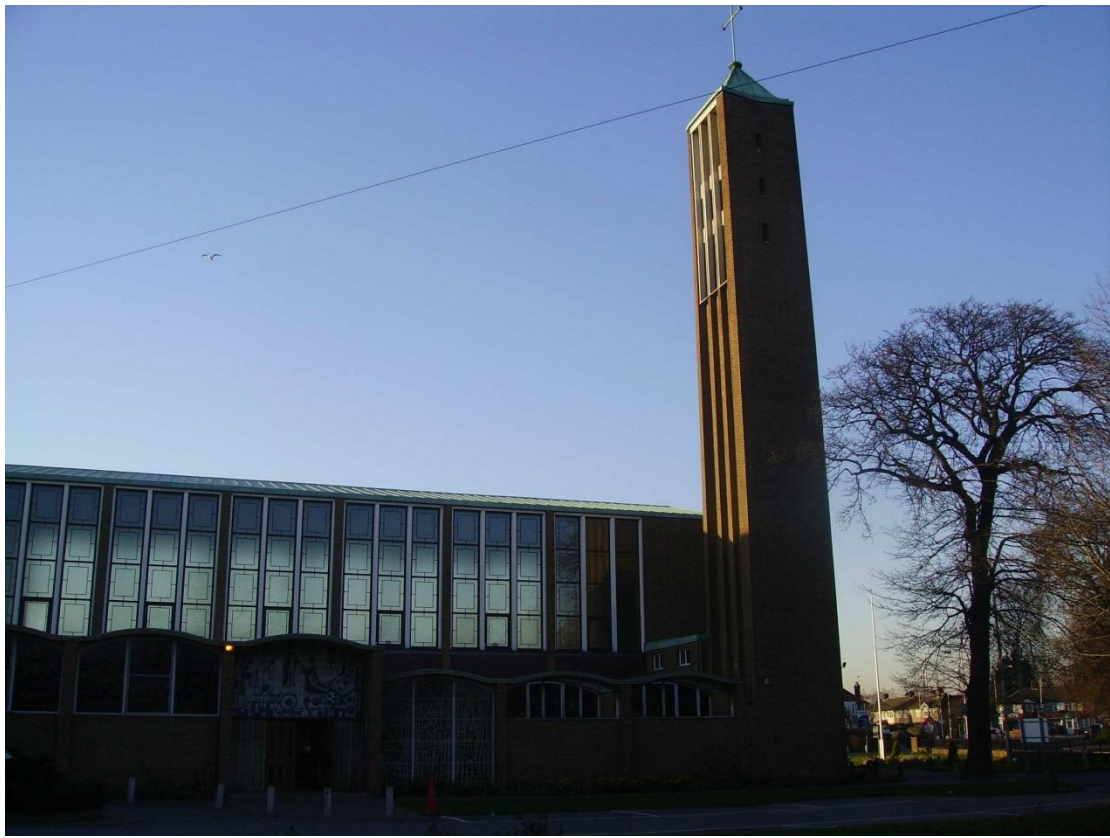


**A TOUR OF ROMAN CATHOLIC POST-WAR CHURCHES IN WEST AND NORTH
WEST LONDON CONCEIVED AND ORGANISED BY ROBERT DRAKE WITH
ROBERT PROCTOR - 25 APRIL 2015**



Church of Immaculate Heart of Mary, Hayes Introduction

Introduction

This event grew out of recognition from the increasing number of cases at Twentieth Century Society (C20) Casework sub-committee concerning post-war Roman Catholic churches that we needed to be able to assess their qualities both architecturally and as to fittings and to find out more about their architects. This was coupled with the *Taking Stock* process initiated by English Heritage (now Historic England) ten years ago of reviewing the architecture and fittings of all consecrated churches in the 19 English Roman Catholic Dioceses. To the surprise of many but not C20 a very high proportion, over 50% of those covered by Taking Stock, were Twentieth Century. In Greater London the proportion is probably even higher with suburban expansion and arrival of Catholic migrant communities particularly from Ireland but also Southern (notably Italy) and from Eastern more recently, with much higher proportions of churchgoers than in the general population. The Taking Stock process is almost complete with only one Diocese still to be started (East Anglia) and it is timely to focus on it as number of churches have already been listed as a result in the RC Dioceses of Shrewsbury, Plymouth, Southwark and Brentwood; more are currently being considered including in the Diocese of Westminster in which all the churches we are seeing today are located.

A further impetus was the updating of C20's list or gazetteer of Places of Christian worship 1914-1990, originally published in our Journal no 3 (in 1998). This was co-ordinated by Elaine Harwood and Andy Foster, and is now unfortunately out of print. We received support from English Heritage to update it for which C20 is very grateful and this was launched last month (although amendments and additional churches and chapels, particularly non-Anglican, are still being added to it). It is now inter-active allowing a search to be made for churches by location, denomination, dedication and listing status as well as by architect which will be hugely helpful for our church casework and I hope for researchers and conservationists generally.

Another reason to look at post-war Catholic churches specifically was the enormous number which were built between 1955 and 1975 (according to Bryan Little over 500 Catholic places of worship were added by 1965 to the almost 4000 existing in 1955) combined with the step change in style and quality of fittings under the influence of Vatican II reforms to the liturgy. These began to take effect as the 1960's progressed, the innovative quality of many of the churches built by the late 1960's is really noticeable in terms of their round, elliptical or polygonal plans, the quality of their stained glass and other specially designed fittings by leading artists. At the same time, the under-documentation and under listing of many of these churches which have been barely written about either at the time (apart from Bryan Little's book, *Catholic Churches since 1623* published in 1966) or since. Part of the purpose of this event is to raise awareness of them, their qualities, their architects and importantly, their current lack of heritage protection (only two of the churches we are seeing today are listed and those very much at the 'traditional' end of the style spectrum).

West and North West London was an area of particularly strong Irish immigration to the UK and new churches had to be built (sometimes to replace bombed out ones but this more the case in East London) or existing churches which were too small were replaced. We are seeing a range of churches, some by nationally known church architects notably H S Goodhart Rendel (Our Lady of the Rosary, Marylebone), Francis Xavier Velarde (St Luke, Pinner), Hector Corfiato (St William of York, Stanmore) and Gerard Goalen (St Gregory the Great, South Ruislip and St Thomas More, Swiss Cottage) and lesser known regional figures building in London and the South East such as John

Newton of Burles, Newton and Partners (St Aidan of Lindisfarne and Immaculate Heart of Mary, Hayes), Justin Alleyn (St Raphael, Yeading) and David Stokes (Our Lady of the Visitation, Greenford). We will be able to compare and contrast the styles of each architect, how they worked with the parish priests who commissioned them and the ensemble of often magnificent fittings that resulted in some of the churches we are visiting.

In other parts of the country, particularly the North West, always the most strongly Roman Catholic part of England, some churches have been closed because of alleged structural failure, have been turned down for listing and are at risk of demolition, such as St Catherine of Siena, Lowton (near Wigan), an early centrally planned church by Weightman and Bullen (of 1959). Their superb St Mary, Leyland (near Preston) was third in the best post-1953 church competition we ran with the National Churches Trust, C20 and EASA in 2013.

However the final reason for the event was to celebrate the publication of Robert Proctor's *Building the Modern Church, Roman Catholic Church Architecture 1955 to 1975* (Ashgate, 2014) which I reviewed in Magazine 2014/3 and which provides a superb, scholarly and in-depth focus on these churches explaining the context in which they were built. I have drawn freely from this in the notes (as I have from Taking Stock descriptions for the Catholic Diocese of Westminster) but I could not hope to emulate the sophistication of ideas in Robert Proctor's book. He will be with us today and will be talking about the churches as will members of the Catholic priesthood who will be able to answer questions on the liturgical significance of fittings or stained glass in the framework of Roman Catholic doctrine and belief.

What are the differences with Anglican churches of the post-war period? From visiting RC churches in preparation for this event, I would say that the churches are very full even with their large capacities and high number of Masses on Sundays. Thus they are still used as places of worship and do not have the pressures within the CofE to use the worship area as a community facility. Their congregations come not only from Ireland, who often still form the bedrock of congregations particularly in the more working class areas, but from all over the world particularly Asia and Latin America. The churches largely retain their original configurations and fittings like pews for the most part although purpose built Baptisteries tend to be closed off and no longer used (as in the CofE). Invariably the high altar area or chancel has been adapted (especially if built before about 1968) to accord with post-Vatican worship with a brought forward altar. Often stained glass and other decoration has been added later, as is frequently the case in Catholic churches.

This will be a very full day, with quite a lot of distance to cover and we need to stick to time as far as possible (not least to fit in with Mass times) and traffic is unpredictable. Other significant churches mainly Anglican and architecture will be pointed out en route with brief mention in the notes but we will not be stopping to see them. We will be offering donations at each church we visit. Lunch will be find your own in Hayes Town Centre where there are a variety of cafes and a Wetherspoons (round corner in Coldharbour Lane).

Itinerary

Meet exit from Edgware Rd Station (Hammersmith & City, Circle and District line) 9.20. Walk short distance to first church.

930 Our Lady of the Rosary, Old Marylebone Rd, London NW1 5QT

Pick up Atbus Coach at 10.00 close to church

1030 St Aidan of Lindisfarne, Old Oak Common Lane, East Acton Depart 11.00

1130 Our Lady of the Visitation, Greenford Rd, Greenford, dep. 1145

Immaculate Heart of Mary, Hayes 1245-1315 (Burles Newton & Partners) (and including lunch break Hayes Town Centre) Depart 1350

St Raphael, Ayles Rd, Yeading 1400-1415

St Gregory the Great, Victoria Rd, South Ruislip 1430 – 1500

St Luke, Love Lane, Pinner 1540 – 1605

St William of York, Du Cros Rd off Marsh Lane, Stanmore 1625-1650

[We will be passing Stanmore Station on Jubilee line after this church if anyone wants to leave us there]

On return to Central London drop off at St Thomas More, Maresfield Gardens, Swiss Cottage 1725 (close to Swiss Cottage and Finchley Rd Stations and walkable to Finchley Rd & Frognal on Overground plus frequent buses to West End and other points : 13, 31, 46, 82, 113)

Coach will then drive straight onto to Baker Street Station which will be the final drop off point.

Our Lady of the Rosary, Old Marylebone Road, Marylebone, H S Goodhart-Rendel 1963 (Grade II)

(Courtesy of Father Johnson and Father Garvey)

Our first stop is an impressive example of Goodhart-Rendel's Catholic Church work, showing his use of polychrome brickwork and inspired to some extent by High Victorian churches. It was designed by Goodhart Rendel but completed after his death in 1959 by D A Reid (lead architect) and F Lewis Curtis of Goodhart Rendel's successor practice F G Broadbent and Partners. The church bears a close relation to Goodhart Rendel's other major RC church in London, Most Holy Trinity, Dockhead, Bermondsey completed in 1960 (also listed Grade II) particularly in its brickwork. As Robert Proctor says in *Building the Modern Church* "both are Romanesque in inspiration but each with an original take on the style". The architect Anthony Jaggard (of John Stark and Partners and whose St Joseph, Wool, Dorset of 1971 has recently been listed) recalled to me his work on the endless drawings for this church, when in Goodhart Rendel's office as an assistant to get the complex vaulting exactly right – he was apparently quite a hard taskmaster.

The current structure replaced a church by Blount of 1870 which was demolished when the new church was built, and the Rosary Hall (by Westmore & Partners of 1968-1969) now stands on the site. The land for the new church was acquired in 1929 but building could not start until the late 1950's and the new church was only consecrated in 1964 – a photograph of this ceremony is in the north aisle towards the entrance, with Cardinal Heenan officiating. It was built to accommodate 820 worshippers.

Our Lady of the Rosary has a family resemblance to Holy Trinity's monumental symmetry and sheer brown brick walls patterned with coloured brickwork, following German rather than Italian Romanesque precedent. Robert Proctor and Alan Powers cite the remarkable early 20th century garrison church in Ulm, southern Germany by Theodor Fischer as an influence but with possibly more influence here at Our Lady of the Rosary from Southern French (particularly Tournus and le Puy Cathedral) and Italian precedent. It's lighter in tone with paler buff and pinkish brick and fits neatly into the street line of its affluent Marylebone location, in contrast to Most Holy Trinity, which, when built, was surrounded by 19th century brick warehouses, both reflecting Goodhart Rendel's philosophy that buildings should fit in with their neighbours. Our Lady of the Rosary has a central bell tower over the west end in contrast to Most Holy Trinity's twin towers looming over a major traffic route (Jamaica Rd) and has a substantial presbytery immediately to the right along the street line.

Their character also shows the influence of the Victorian architect of the Gothic Revival, William Butterfield, about whom Goodhart Rendel lectured in 1934, but applying a contemporary analysis to Butterfield's approach to materials and composition to the Roman Catholic neo-Romanesque tradition.

The west facade is dominated by a rectangular three-stage tower with a low saddleback roof parallel to the road and blind lower flanking walls, separated by two-storey buttresses. The entrance is square-headed with triple blind arches above, the whole having a pleasing symmetry. A single round headed window above with an attractive decorated surround in Clipsham stone. At top level, the bell stage has six louvres separated by buttresses. The main door has Celtic style tracery.

What is possibly most impressive about the interior is the long nave articulated by large Gothic transverse arches carrying 3 upper arches per transverse arch under concrete vaults. There are some vestigial gothic features such as the narrow lancet windows on three sides of the sanctuary with sharply angled tops like a late-medieval wimple headdress. All the windows were set high to reduce traffic noise. The decoration is concentrated in the Sanctuary area, the church otherwise being quite austere (with no stained glass other than two small abstract panels, authorship unknown, in the south aisle chapel of St Alban).

Between the east window lancets 15 tiled panels were installed in 1966 depicting the Mysteries of the Rosary (Resurrection, Ascension, Coming of the Holy Spirit, Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin) in a neo-primitive almost Byzantine style. They were arranged in five panels between the narrow lancets with three depictions vertically arranged on each panel and were designed by Joseph William Ledger (1926-2010) for Carter & Co. of Poole and were hand-painted by Phyllis Butler before firing. (Their authorship is omitted from the list description). Ledger also designed stained glass for Goodhart-Rendel for St John the Evangelist at St Leonard's-on-Sea (a rebuild of a bombed Anglican church by Butterfield), as well as two other tiled reredoses for Goodhart Rendel churches both in 1955: St Mary the Virgin (CofE), Isleworth and St John Fisher RC, Rochester.

Carter's also supplied the patterned blue and grey glazed tiling for the Sanctuary dado which includes Marian symbols (alternating letter M and crown) and a memorial tile to Monsignor Canon Wood who instigated building of the church. Above the Carter and Co. dado, white and 'pastel green' (listing description) stencilling was used. The Sanctuary is completed by a fine blue, white and gold decorative tester suspended at high level above the altar, similar to that designed by Goodhart Rendel himself for Most Holy Trinity, Dockhead. There are also attractive ironwork grills over the openings to the Sacred Heart and Our Lady chapels either side of the Sanctuary. These have coloured marble altars, matching marble reredoses and handsome black

marble altar rails (which were moved from the Sanctuary when it was remodelled in 2004-2005 by Gerald Murphy). The two south aisle chapels (dedicated to St Joseph and St Alban) plus the Sacred Heart chapel have sculpture by David Wheeler.



Transverse arches at Our Lady of the Rosary, Marylebone

This remodelling by Gerald Murphy was a difficult case for the Society over the period 2002-4 and what we see today is a compromise accommodating the church's desire for an extended sanctuary and some re-ordering with preservation of most but not all of the historic fabric. C20 persuaded the church not to build an arch over the chancel and retain the separate baptistery as well something close to the original wall colours of the church. We did agree reluctantly to re-positioning of the octagonal stone pulpit and its cutting down to become in effect an ambo (i.e. at floor level) to the left of the sanctuary – it is banded in dark green and Portland stone and is a replica of the banded ambo in Most Holy Trinity, Dockhead. In the sanctuary, the same marbles were used for the Sanctuary extension and the original altar is still there against the East end where the Blessed Sacrament is now reserved (following post-Vatican II Roman Catholic practice of often having it on a separate altar to the High altar). The church was already listed at Grade II at the time of these

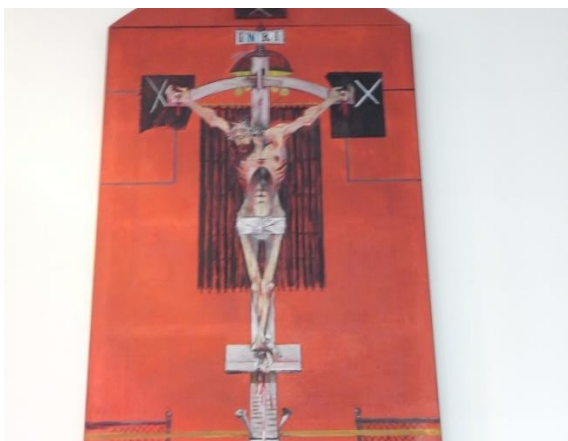
alterations which meant we were consulted on these plans – which is why it is important that other post-war churches of this quality should be listed.

The Stations of the Cross are rectangular casts by the Sisters of St Michael's Convent, Ham Common, Richmond affixed to the pillars separating nave from aisles. The westernmost bay of the north aisle contains the baptistery with a circular stone font with wooden cover and fine wrought-iron gates with a dove symbol at their apex. The only major fitting from the original church is the organ of 1865 in the West end gallery by Bishop and Starr. The four confessionals are flush with the north wall with simple wood boarded doors. Decorative pendant lights hang from flanks of transverse arches and a six-pointed modern looking metal chandelier hangs in the crossing. The listing description says that it is "a grand church which displays Goodhart-Rendel's manipulation of spaces and planes to great effect: his last work and one of his best" to which I think we would all agree.

The cost of the church was very high for the time – at almost £145,000 (with presbytery £190,000 – source Robert Proctor) in 1957, reflecting its use of traditional materials and its scale but the parish had been saving funds for some time to build a church on this site. At the consecration of Most Holy Trinity one of the clergy present was heard to remark "this will be the last of the 'big ones'" (source Alan Powers) and that comment applies to some extent to Our Lady of the Rosary. A number of such large-scale and lavish Catholic churches were built in more affluent parts of London at the time (such as Our Lady of Victories by Adrian and Our Lady of Mount Carmel by Giles Gilbert Scott in Kensington) and sometimes in poorer areas such as St Mary and St Joseph, Poplar as bomb replacement by Adrian Gilbert Scott. Cost pressures as well as liturgical change meant a move to simpler and more modern and usually less costly churches after 1960 when inflation became a significant factor and which could accommodate large congregations. The Diocese under Cardinal Heenan from 1963 also became more open to modern churches than under his predecessor Cardinal Godfrey who wanted a more traditional approach. However, decisions on which architect to commission and style were always made by parish priests although they needed approval from the Diocese.)

We now pick up our coach and travel along the Westway to our next church in East Acton.

St Aidan of Lindisfarne, Old Oak Common Lane, East Acton, John Newton of Burles, Newton & Partners 1958-61 (unlisted) (By kind permission of Father Fergal Maguire)

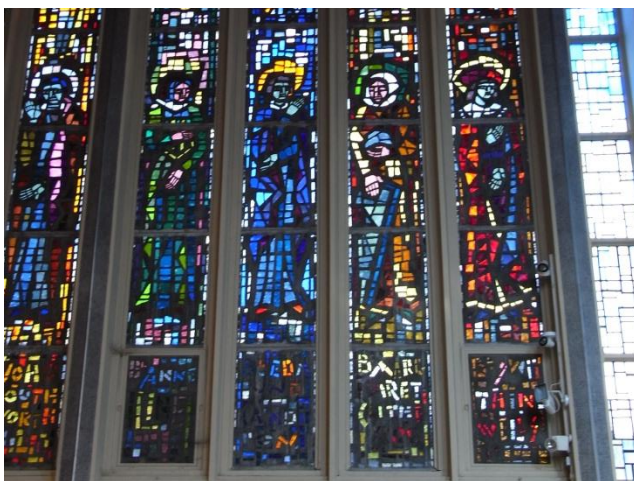


Crucifixion by Graham Sutherland in Sanctuary at St Aidan, East Acton

This is a church by an important regional Roman Catholic Church practice originally based in Southend-on-Sea that started building churches in the Diocese of Brentwood (Essex and outer East London), most notably St Basil the Great, Barstable, Basildon (1956) and St Michael, Tilbury Rd, East Ham (1958-9). The lead figure in the practice in the post-war period was (Alexander) John Newton who had been architect and town planner for Basildon until setting up in private practice in 1954.

What makes St Aidan exceptional is the splendid quality of its fittings, which repay detailed study, by leading artists of the day working in Catholic churches, most notably Graham Sutherland and Pierre Fourmaintraux. It is remarkable that it's not listed on account of these. It replaced what is described in VCR as a concrete block house of the 1920's on the same site. It opened for worship in 1961 but was consecrated only in 1972 (only done in the Roman Catholic Church when loans to pay for the church have been paid off, explaining the frequent discrepancy between the start of worship and actual consecration).

St Aidan's, built of reinforced concrete and brick, has a simple portal frame and campanile with a clock at the top and a nine light West window facing the street in a shopping parade with the Presbytery (no longer used as such) to the right. This tower formerly contained nine bells from the Whitechapel Foundry and was much taller - their removal led to its shortening as the top belfry section was no longer needed. It has above the window into the Baptistry a Portland stone statue of St Aidan (by Kathleen Parbury). This saint came from Ireland (so a connection at the entrance with the original congregation) and founded the monastic community at Lindisfarne in Northumberland in 634. However, the art reflects not just the dedication but saints associated with the evangelisation of England and 16th and 17th century Catholic martyrs. The artworks were commissioned by the enigmatic parish priest James Ethrington who clearly wanted to provide a Catholic counterpart to Walter Hussey at St Matthew, Northampton and Chichester Cathedral. He demonstrably wished to place the Catholic Church at the forefront of modern art of the day, banishing the sentimentality of Catholic imagery associated with the shrines of Lourdes and Lisieux and show the influence of the Art Sacré movement's churches at Assy and Audincourt (latter visited on a C20 visit in 2000).



Glass of English Martyrs by Fourmaintraux at St Aidan, East Acton

One's eye is arrested on entering the nave proper by the starkly graphic bright red image of a tortured, visibly emaciated figure of Christ on the Cross by Graham Sutherland, one of his most

arresting works at the (liturgical) East end above the altar and unveiled in 1963. This was apparently painted *in situ* by Sutherland who had converted to Roman Catholicism and was his first work in a Catholic church. On closer examination one sees a string of barbed wire at the base and electric bulbs burning above the cross at the top, so the conscious imagery of a concentration camp. His Coventry Cathedral tapestry, which is slightly earlier, also has a crucifixion image at its base. It was conserved by International Fine Art Conservation Studios (IFACS) of Bristol in 2011.

However, first the narthex (where we may have to wait until the 10 o'clock Mass is finished) which contains on its right-hand side a handy plaque detailing the art works and their authorship. To the left is a gated baptistery topped by a Cross, no longer used for baptisms from the evidence of potted plants on the font cover. Its far wall is decorated with ceramic tilework by Adam Kossowski, of Polish origin, and who contributed ceramics to many 1960's Catholic churches including St Mary, Leyland (II*) and St Aloysius, Somers Town but perhaps most notably in the chapels at the Carmelite Priory at Aylesford in Kent. This tilework consists of two pairs of stylised angels and a dove (representing the Holy Spirit) with a surround against a striking backdrop of variegated blue and green tiles on the south wall and depictions of running water around the edge. The font was designed by John Newton.

On the either side of the entrance to the narthex, there are six semi abstract stained glass windows by Pierre Fourmaintraux on the theme of the evangelisation of England including one showing a crown (for King Alfred) and a ship; the Glastonbury thorn tree; a ship with a cross representing St Augustine coming to Canterbury from Rome; and a rising sun representing the renewal of the Catholic faith in England, a foretaste of his glass inside. On the screen facing the nave, there are four Perspex panels of the Evangelists by Arthur Fleischmann.

The church itself has a wide five-bay nave with a conventional Basilican layout, flanked by aisles, each of which open out into chapels in the two easterly bays. The roof covering consists of a series of triangular spaces with boarded infilling. The openings into the aisles are almost square and the slender piers are of reinforced concrete, rising to the top of the building and infilled with bluish-grey mosaic which subtly adds to the luminosity. Lighting is provided by the large west window and also a deep clerestory with narrow strips of glazing (this is by Arthur Buss of Goddard and Gibbs who frequently collaborated with Newton and was installed in 1961). This glazing is abstract in contrast to the rest and is graded from off-white/yellow to dark tones (mainly blue) higher up. At the far end of the sanctuary the wall is blind although the side windows on each side are tall and are richly glazed in dalle de verre (literally 'paves' of glass set in concrete). It was designed and made by Pierre Fourmaintraux of James Powell & Co (Whitefriars) and is some of the most remarkable of its date.

These windows each of 5 panels depicts English saints and martyrs, abstractly treated with their names beneath, sometimes difficult to discern but it can be done with perseverance. On the left hand (north) side we have St Alban (first British martyr), St Mellitus (a missionary to England), St Hilda (of Whitby), St Erconwald (an early Anglo-Saxon Bishop of London), St Thomas of Canterbury (i.e. Thomas à Becket) and St Edmund (King and Martyr). On the right hand (south) side, we have English Martyrs denoted as "Blessed" (Bd or Bl) as they were not canonised when the glass was installed. From the East end we have: Irish martyr, Oliver Plunkett; John Southworth (but represented by St John the Evangelist) executed during the Commonwealth; Anne Line; Edmund

Campion (after whom the Jesuit College at Oxford University is named); Margaret Clitherow and Swithun Wells.



Station by Arthur Fleischmann, St Aidan, East Acton

The other arresting feature of the interior are the Stations of the Cross by the sculptor Arthur Fleischmann (1896 -1990) arranged along the walls of the chapels, with ceramic (or possibly cement) representations standing on ledges, backed by colourful blue-toned mosaic work, each Station divided by a blue and gold-backed cross, one of his most significant works and a very striking set of stations. He came from near Bratislava, Slovakia (pre WWI, Pressburg or, in Hungarian, Pozsony) where his work is to be found in the Town Museum which we may see on our forthcoming Bratislava and Brno event. Before the war he was primarily a sculptor and ceramicist and worked in Bali. In in the post-war period, living in London, he became best known for his sculptures in Perspex both for corporate clients like ICI but also in Catholic churches (and we will another set later today at Hayes). He did a metal and Perspex Resurrection for the Vatican's pavilion at the Brussels 1958 Exhibition.

Either side of the Sanctuary are examples of the work of the Australian artist and Catholic convert Roy de Maistre who like Kossowski and Fleischmann regularly worked with John Newton. He did the triptychs in the Sacred Heart Chapel to the left (with St John Fisher and St Thomas More either side of the figure of Christ) and the Our Lady of Walsingham chapel to the right (with St Aidan and St Oswald either side) in a neo-primitive style influenced by early Byzantine art. De Maistre was a key figure in Catholic religious art in the 1950's and 60's with work by him in Westminster Cathedral. He is best known for his 'colour music' paintings of the 1920's designed as therapy for shell-shocked soldiers and was a close associate of Francis Bacon and the novelist Patrick White in the 1930's.

Finally to the sculpture, that inside the church being mostly carved in pale limewood. Kathleen Parbury, as well as sculpting the image of St Aidan outside, did St Thérèse of Lisieux in the south aisle which is next to St Anthony of Padua by Philip Lindsey Clark with a pale blue background. Arthur J Ayres did St Gerald Majella (in the Children's Chapel on north side of porch (behind a closed door) and George E Campbell, St Joseph holding a sheaf of wheat in the North aisle. The Head of Christ in the Sacred Heart chapel is a work of some nobility also by Campbell of 1971. The fish on the

tabernacle doors were designed by John Newton. The organ was by Noel Mander. Also note the simple pulpit (more like a preaching stand to right of Sanctuary) which is an original feature. Unusually this church retains its original altar rails, normally removed when Sanctuaries were expanded in accordance with Vatican II.

What is remarkable is that whole ensemble was mostly complete by 1965. Ethrington prepared a booklet on St Aidan's artworks, inviting the then art critic for the Daily Telegraph, Terrance Mullaly, to contribute an endorsement (information from *Building the Modern Church*, p. 115). It was intended to reach beyond Catholics and appeal to the general public. Sutherland, the only artist of truly international stature in the group, was here claimed for Catholicism as a convert, lending his credentials to other more conventional artists at St Aidan's but nonetheless a distinguished and international group. Mullaly emphasised the transforming of the reputation for kitsch that adhered to Christian and particularly RC churches at this time, writing that St Aidan's "has broken with this bad old tradition". I will have some copies of the booklet available

We now re-join the coach to continue along the Western Avenue to our next group of churches. Beyond the Hanger Lane underpass we pass on the right the jagged aluminium roof of St John Fisher, Langdale Gardens, Perivale of 1970-3 by B D Kaye He also did English Martyrs, a circular church in Chalkhill Rd, Wembley in 1971.

OUR LADY OF THE VISITATION, GREENFORD ROAD, GREENFORD, DAVID STOKES 1956-61 (unlisted)

(by kind permission of the Parish Office and Father Keith Dwyer)

This is a contrast with the churches we have seen so far, a dramatic parabolic arched church of the late 1950's with an almost industrial aesthetic, whose power comes from its pre-cast reinforced concrete arches which support the clerestory. It has fewer fine fittings but is not devoid of them as *'Taking Stock'* claims (and activities are taking place in the church when we visit) but its powerful interior is not to be missed – best seen from the West end gallery which should be open.

The parish was founded in 1928 with a hall church built in 1937 and still surviving across from the present church. This new church was needed to provide more extensive and suitable accommodation in an area with much new housing and migration from Ireland in the 1950's. It was built in 1960-61 to modern, but pre-Vatican II, design ideas. The architect was David Stokes, who was the son of Leonard Stokes (architect not just of telephone exchanges but of the Anglican London Colney convent to which Ninian Comper added a chapel in the 1920's, a current Society case). David Stokes actually designed the church as early as 1955-6. His only other significant churches seem to have been Our Lady of Walsingham also at London Colney (1959) and rebuilding of Holy Name, Bow Common after bomb damage.



Interior of Our Lady of the Visitation, Greenford looking towards Sanctuary

As Robert Proctor says in *Building the Modern Church* “its exterior was municipal in style, resembling a theatre or swimming pool”. Its obvious antecedent is Easton and Robertson’s Royal Horticultural Halls in Vincent Square, Westminster. However, at Greenford the intention was explicitly to eliminate aisles and columns and to allow a broad rather than a long nave. At the west end there is a single storey narthex. To the North West a tall, gaunt campanile without even a cross on it rears above an opening between the church and the adjoining school. The parabolic arches are marked externally on the south side by small, low brick buttresses, while on the north (street) the feet of the arches are exposed. Some polychromatic detailing in an inappropriate ‘Butterfieldian’ style using darker bricks to contrast with the red brick was added in the 1990s by D. W. Aitken, to replace square concrete panel cladding, which had apparently failed.

The western part of the sanctuary is lit by a mesh of small rectangular windows with white and bright yellow glazing. A similar mesh forms a large west window but here the panels are coloured very light blue. The most dramatic stained glass are the strips of very thin multi-coloured glass either side of the nave which have quite an ethereal effect on a sunny day with blues, greens, yellows, oranges and purples dominant (and is an original feature supplied by James Hetley & Co). In the nave there is a clerestory on either side formed of a continuous row of clear glazed rectangular panels with aluminium frames and brick piers, 1990s replacements for square concrete framed openings. The internal walls are rendered and are painted off-white or cream. A small Blessed Sacrament chapel is located behind a glazed screen on the north side of the sanctuary (an addition since consecration). The organ pipes are inserted into plain niches either side of the Sanctuary. The

confessionals (two on either side) are pleasingly designed with slightly bowed out vertical oak boarding.

Our Lady of the Visitation, unusually for a Catholic church, was written up in the architectural press, specifically in the *Builder* 19 January 1962. It describes the aluminium baldachino, partly finished with gold leaf and from which hung a Perspex canopy, no longer there. The article goes on to say that this was lit by three lights concealed at the back which also threw beams of light on the High altar of Cornish granite (still there as are statues of Christ and Mary, Queen of Heaven, either side of the sanctuary but I do not know who the sculptor was); however, the granite communion rails and dwarf red walls of Cork red marble around the Sanctuary have been removed. The photo coverage shows the austere lighting, also gone, quite high-tech in its modernity and a church interior reminiscent of those by Andy McMillan and Izi Metzstein for Gillespie, Kidd & Coia in Scotland. It reveals that the cost was almost £65,000, so much cheaper than Our Lady of the Rosary, Marylebone. The paintings of the Stations of the Cross were commissioned from Philip Le Bas and date from 1960 or 1961.

How was David Stokes and his client, the parish priest, able to push through to consecration such a modern church as early as 1961, when the then Archbishop (Godfrey) was a real conservative in terms of style? Godfrey demanded that architects submit to him detailed drawings of liturgical fittings and according to *Building the Modern Church* Stokes was quizzed in particular about the altar and baldachino and told to show the parish priest a similar built example (at London Colney). When Heenan became Archbishop of Westminster in 1963 there was much greater acceptance of modern design as Vatican II reforms also began to make themselves felt. Nonetheless this is a remarkable church for its date and deserves to be better known.

This church was substituted for one by Reynolds & Scott, Our Lady and St Joseph, Uxbridge Rd, Hanwell with a distinctive jagged shape but they are busy with confirmation classes. Reynolds and Scott were prolific builders of Catholic churches in the North of England with a few in London including St Joseph, High Rd, Wembley in a traditional basilican style. Their church of St John, Timperley near Manchester was delisted and subsequently demolished recently after being erroneously described in the listing description as by Adrian Gilbert Scott (and not by William Scott of Reynolds and Scott).

IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, BOTWELL LANE, HAYES (Middlesex) by Burles, Newton and Partners of 1961 (unlisted)

(By kind permission of Father Dominic McDonagh, CMF)

This is another church by John Newton of Burles, Newton, almost contemporary with St Aidan, East Acton but with a powerful presence and able to accommodate a thousand worshippers. It has a plain exterior with thin light brown bricks and a very tall, slightly canted campanile with strongly accentuated projections, almost Venetian in its scale, and with the bell openings constructed in white concrete in contrast to the buff bricks. Its assertiveness reflects the post-war confidence of the Roman Catholic Church in England, with the church built in a prominent town centre position, rather than tucked down a side street.

In industrial Hayes, close to railway and canal and with His Master's Voice (by Wallis Gilbert) a major employer and a growing Heathrow Airport close by, the Irish Catholic community formed the bulk of the congregation originally. That has changed to some extent, as with other outer suburban RC churches, with Catholics coming in more recent years from South and East Asia and Latin America who have revived the congregation. The Claretian Order who founded the church in 1912 (their Presbytery is at right angles to the church with hall beyond) are a missionary order founded in Spain who proselytised in South America and Europe.

Immaculate Heart of Mary's traditional basilica form pre-dates the experiments with circular and elliptical plans, to bring the congregation nearer to the altar, reflecting Vatican II, which we will see in the Goalen churches later. It is closer in style to Our Lady Queen of the Apostles in nearby Heston (Hounslow) also by John Newton of 1964 which also has Fourmaintraux glass and a landmark tower. Immaculate Heart of Mary has a wide (circa 40ft), seven-bay nave and correspondingly wide aisles, with the (liturgical) north aisle having a very narrow outer aisle. The aisles are covered in wave-like roofs which are reflected internally by the low, segmental coverings of each bay, clad in pale green mosaic (a feature reminiscent of St Albans). The ceiling is innovative in its sail-like form secured by visible struts, if you look up. At the west end is a broad nine-light window with plain mullions, like a stripped version of a great west window in a major Perpendicular church which floods the church with light. The side walls of the nave are dominated by a vast clerestory arrangement, forming a continuous wall of clear glass with stained glass in the (outer) aisle windows.



There is a statue of the Virgin Mary by Michael Clark on the exterior against the West window. Over the current north entrance, a blue and white tile over-door feature represents the history of the Claretian fathers is by Kossowski. The spacious and light filled interior has ambitious modern furnishings, perhaps not of the exceptional quality of St Aidan, but still a significant ensemble of glass and paintings.

Again like St Aidan, the Stations of the Cross are by Arthur Fleischmann but this time in gold on glassy blue-green Perspex backgrounds framed in slate. Perhaps what is most significant here (rather like a Spanish or Italian church) are the paintings, the most arresting of which is the Virgin and Child above the high altar by Pietro Annigoni (1962), famous for his portrait of HM the Queen of this era. This is dominating and heavily symbolic and restored about 10 years ago. There is a St Jude by Daniel O'Connell in the chapel to the left of the high altar. There was originally a painting of Crucifixion by Roy de Maistre (which is now believed to be in Westminster Cathedral) and a portrait of St Anthony Mary Claret by William Redgrave which was to the right of the entrance.

The stained glass is again by Goddard and Gibbs and Fourmaintraux but at Immaculate Heart of Mary the latter only did one fine Dalle de Verre window in the first chapel to the right of the entrance, installed by 1964. The rest is a mix of figurative, text and abstract glass mostly designed by Arthur Buss for Goddard and Gibbs and done in the early 1970's. The Annigoni picture is surrounded by slit windows containing coloured glass and, on either side of the Sanctuary, highly coloured semi-abstract glass in three lights creating a 'wall of glass' effect. From the ceiling above the high altar a simple wavy tester is suspended to create a modern looking sanctuary.

There is a separate Blessed Sacrament Chapel on the south side. The reservation of the Sacrament separately from the High Altar was only just beginning to be a feature of Catholic churches in this period. The glass in this aisle shows images of the Eucharist (Lamb of God, with the grapes having qualities of Victorian glass colouration, the Last Supper and Pelican), followed by three windows of three panes each showing simple texts in coloured letters meandering over the pane and with two further such windows on north side (for example "Believe in one Catholic Apostolic Church"). They serve a devotional as well as a decorative purpose. The West end has the organ and choir stalls as well as a donor book recording those who contributed to the cost of the church – most such churches were paid for in large measure by parishioners' donations given on a regular basis. Beyond the entrance, in the Lady Chapel, glass (designed by J N Lawson) graphically representing the people, priests and in left panel industries of Hayes (such as chemicals through poured water and towards the bottom a barge) in two streams converging on Christ led by their Bishop on the left in strong and vibrant colours. Note the contemporary dress such as the ubiquitous donkey jacket of the era for the men, mostly manual workers in this parish.

Other churches by John Newton for Burles, Newton & Partners in the area include St Anselm, South St, Southall, a fan shaped church of 1967 with Reyntiens glass, St Francis de Sales, Hampton Hill of 1966 (as well as Our Lady Queen of the Apostles, Heston of 1964 and St Aloysius, Somers Town of 1968 already mentioned).

Lunch is 'find your own' in Hayes Town Centre adjacent where there are many food outlets although mostly of the fast food variety (Wetherspoons is up on the left in Coldharbour Lane).

ST RAPHAEL, AYLES AVENUE, YEADING BY JUSTIN H ALLEYN OF 1961 (unlisted)

(by kind permission of Father John Welsh)



Stained glass by Pierre Fourmaintraux at St Raphael, Yeading

A short diversion to see an early 1960's church by another important regional Catholic Church architect Justin Alleyn. His best known (octagonal) church is perhaps English Martyrs, Horley (Surrey) which has an unusual stained glass Stations of the Cross by in dalle de verre by Fourmaintraux, with other churches at Merstham (St Teresa) and Ewell (St Clement) in the same county and St Augustine in Hoddesdon, Herts. Pevsner described it as more daring than its Anglican contemporaries given its relatively early date which I think is right and its hidden away site on a housing estate might have allowed the priest (Eamon Scanlon) more leeway.

St Raphael's is built of buff-yellow Leicester brick which is exposed inside and out with reinforced columns and ceilings. It's smaller than other churches we have seen designed to seat 450-500. It has a traditional aisled plan, the aisles being low and under flat roofs. The nave roof is copper-clad. A detached, tall, sheer bell-tower stands at the North East corner, its top an open cage with concrete members. The nave has a clerestory of five hexagonal windows, with windows of the same shape also placed in the east and west walls (all these windows having clear glass). Each contains within the glass a hexagon shape within a hexagon. Above the windows are triangular upward projections which considerably enliven the external silhouette of the church. Externally the walling beneath each high-level window is clad with sheets of copper. At the West end, there is a portico with a glazed central portion forming a porch and a projecting sculpture of St Raphael of moulded fibre glass by Hugh Powell over it.

Behind the porch, concrete columns support a gallery with the same form of columns between the nave and aisles and above the columns is a band of bare concrete. The roof of the nave is boarded

and is cranked upwards to clear the clerestory windows, thus producing a distinctive serrated profile. The area beneath the clerestory windows has vertical wooden panelling interspersed with the buff brick.

In each of the four bays of the aisles is a rectangular window of five lights; these contain thick slab-in-concrete abstract stained glass by Pierre Fourmaintraux which form the most arresting feature with distinct colour tones (from West end four windows in each aisle: orange/red, brown/buff, green/yellow/blue, blue/red). There is an additional and more elaborate window in the Lady Chapel in south aisle in bright blue tones with stars and Marian symbols which with the jagged silhouette at upper level give the church a very modern feel.

The only references back to more traditional fittings are the marble backed High and Lady Chapel altars which Robert Proctor recounts were ordered by Father Scanlon (also a baldachino) without the architect's knowledge and would have compromised his austere aesthetic in terms of materials. Alleyn eventually incorporated the broad panels of Irish Connemara marble into an otherwise modern design as reredos-like backdrops of the high altar (covering the wall space up to the East end hexagonal window) and Lady Chapel. However, no baldachino was installed.

This is a small church in an area of social housing but for 1961 an uncompromisingly modern and coherent design. It demonstrates that lesser known architects operating at a regional level and unreported in the architectural press (other than in the annual Catholic Building Review Southern or Northern editions) built churches of quality. The austerity may have been influenced by cost but the church has been virtually unaltered and certainly functions well having seen it full to capacity used for a Palm Sunday Mass.

On returning to the main road (Yeading Lane) glimpse on the right of Maguire and Murray's St Joseph the Worker Anglican Church, completed in 1970, in a starkly modern style complete with separate and very industrial round tower, a windowless zinc box church on 'fortcrete' blockwork and an equally stark vicarage just beyond (still in use). The interior of the church has been altered although the main elements survive. It was refused listing about 10 years ago.

ST GREGORY THE GREAT, SOUTH RUISLIP, GERALD GOALEN 1966-1967 (unlisted)

(by kind permission of Canon Paul McGinn)

Goalen was one the leading Roman Catholic church architects of his day, responsible for our Lady of Fatima, Harlow (1954-1960, Grade II) which made his name as a church architect. His next church was the Good Shepherd, Woodthorpe, Nottingham (1962-1964, Grade II*) which has an innovative hexagonal plan and upturned umbrella roof. Goalen was in partnership with Frederick Gibberd (hence the Harlow commission). He was beaten by Gibberd to win the commission for the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King in Liverpool, Goalen. This was probably quite galling for Goalen as Gibberd was not a man of particular religious conviction or even with much experience of church building (and Liverpool was Goalen's home city and where he trained as an architect). Here at South Ruislip, we have an ingenious design, with a visibly rectangular framework, particularly powerful from within, enhanced by high quality fittings by leading artists most of whom had worked at Coventry Cathedral like Patrick Reyntiens (who made the Baptistery window at Coventry,

designed by John Piper and who was a Roman Catholic), Willi Soukop, Ralph Beyer (who did the lettering at Coventry Cathedral and St Pauls, Bow Common), Stephen Sykes (who worked on the Gethsemane Chapel at Coventry) and in addition Dom Charles Norris, OSB of Buckfast Abbey.

Robert Proctor treats this church in *Building the Modern Church* as symptomatic of new church construction of the period when over one thousand Catholic churches were built. The factors were: a new parish had to be founded, so a clean slate; a charismatic priest, Father Philip Dayer (plaque to him inside main entrance), who encouraged his congregation to give weekly sums but rallied them by saying it did not all need to be paid for at once as a loan would be taken to pay about 50% of the costs (which was standard practice). As for choice of architect, Proctor found an *Architect and Building News* article in the church archive about Goalen's then just completed Good Shepherd in Nottingham. Martin Goalen told me that his father found Dayer the perfect client and that he regarded this church as his best church and I would not disagree.

What is significant about this church, when designed in 1965, was that it was a direct response to Vatican II liturgical reforms. A simple stone altar was placed forward of the oval Sanctuary so that the priest could say the Mass facing the congregation and the tabernacle was placed in a silvered box in a broad niche behind it – so there was no need for adaptations such as moving the altar forward or creating a second one (and removing Sanctuary rails or low walls) as was the case in most churches completed only a few years earlier. Significantly Heenan (assessor for the Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral competition when Archbishop there) personally approved plans for the church and took a close interest in it, just before setting out for Rome for the final session of the Vatican Council. Goalen also had a close personal role, being one of the Catholic members of the non-denominational New Churches Research Group, set up by Robert Maguire and Peter Hammond. Goalen also lectured to the congregation at St Gregory (whose funds were after all paying for it). He was to convince Dayer and his flock of the need for high quality fittings by leading artists of the time and to provide them with nothing 'off the shelf'.

The roof beams project above the clerestory and are supported inside by shuttered concrete columns (with marks of the wood used for the shuttering still visible) forming an ambulatory at the west end (entrance) with top lighting through small ceiling portholes. Proctor cites St Catherine's College, Oxford as the precedent for this overall design. The western half of the clerestory originally only had clear panes but the eastern half is differently treated, with triangular concrete vertical members which diffuse the light from the clear glazing behind. The resulting ellipse or oval makes a very satisfactory space with laying of brick in a vermiculated (protruding) form right around the ellipse to a height of about 8 feet (except at the far ends) with bricks laid flat above to give different textures. Originally pieces of foam were tucked behind the protruding bricks to improve acoustics but these have mostly disintegrated.

Attention to detail is carried through to the brick under the benches (fixed to concrete uprights embedded in the sloping floor) subtly contrasting with black slate for the passage ways. There is also a narrow integrated choir to the left of the Sanctuary which was originally lower.

It is the glass and the lettering which really marks this interior out. Here we have the Lamb of God with sword above the high altar by Patrick Reyntiens in his trademark vibrant red and blues and the windows in the semi-circular baptistery to the right of the nave, clearly discernible from outside. In the baptistery, now no longer used for this purpose, a wall of glass in translucent blues and yellows

around the font, with the name of the seven sacraments written in almost whimsical lettering (and in English which was still novel then in RC churches): the Eucharist (blue roundel), anointing (green), baptism (blue), penance (green), confirmation (blue), marriage (green) to the right and slightly apart, as a path taken only by some, holy orders (green). The font has lettering around the sides on a stone band top “Water by God’s gift, a Mother” above more vermiculated but black brick at the base of the font. Beyer was an émigré from Germany with whom the Society visited Coventry Cathedral in the early 1990’s to see his marvellous inscriptions there (also at entrance to St Paul’s Bow Common).



Lettering by Stephen Sykes over entrance of St Gregory the Great, South Ruislip

The nine windows of slab in resin or “dalle de verre” glass on the west side of the ellipse and the lower slot windows are by Dom Charles Norris and added 1985-1991. They have a jewel like effect achieved by chipping the glass – the four evangelists are down below (Mark and Matthew to left of entrance, one above the other) and Luke and John to the right, all without their usual symbols (lion, bull etc.) and various themes above in the clerestory (St Gregory, the Annunciation, Nativity, Last Supper, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Pentecost, Assumption and the Blessed Sacrament). Norris glass is found in many RC and CofE churches of the 1960’s, particularly in the West Country, most notably perhaps at Buckfast Abbey in Devon and Our Lady of Fatima, Harlow, the technique coming from Gabriel Loire’s studio at Chartres of setting glass in concrete.

In front of the Baptistry, sculptures by Willi Soukop of the Virgin and child in an almost contemporary depiction and of an elongated St Gregory (who initiated the evangelisation of England when Pope) with swooping dove above. Soukop’s ceramic donkeys may be seen at Dartington, and

more sculpture at Goalen's church of St Gabriel, Upper Holloway. (Goalen's 4th church in Westminster Diocese, Our Lady and St Christopher, Cranford, Hounslow is polygonal in shape combining worship and social areas but contains few fittings). The lettering over the entrance door to the church is by Stephen Sykes ("Come into the Temple of God that your lot may be with Christ in life Eternal"). The organ perches atop a bowed out concrete beam at the entrance, adding to the overall circularity. There was also an enamelled cross over the altar by Sykes but it no longer seems to be there replaced by a simple wooden crucifixion. Note the separate children's area, to the left of the entrance not designed as an afterthought but as an integral part of the design (so an early example of this). Apparently mothers in the congregation now think it is dangerous and too close to the street. They also do not like the Baptistry, as it cannot accommodate large baptismal parties, so a new wooden font has been placed next to the altar (and hence the potted plants atop the one in the original Baptistry). There are bronze Stations of the Cross on what look like simple plywood panels but I do not know the authorship of these.



Interior of St Gregory the Great, South Ruislip looking towards Sanctuary and stained glass of Lamb of God by Patrick Reyntiens

Elain Harwood in her article "Liturgy and Architecture" in C20 Journal no. 3 and Martin Goalen in his recent lecture to us (in the Spring 2015 'My Parent the Architect' series) describes Goalen's European church travels in 1956 and what he was impressed by – he questioned the fashion for round churches but was transfixed by the use of glass at Notre Dame du Haut at Ronchamps, Audincourt (near Belfort) with glass by Fernand Léger and Bazaine, Moser's St Antonius in Basel and Churches by Dominikus and Gottfried Boehm in Saarland. These Continental influences are reflected

as far as funds obviously allowed in this commission which I described as a definite candidate for listing in my West London church tour of 2008. It is very well cared for but still unlisted.

En route to Pinner we pass close to St Mary, the Fairway, South Ruislip a portal frame church by Laurence King of 1958-9 with glass by Keith New and depending on route taken St Laurence, Eastcote by Sir Charles Nicholson of 1931-2 on corner of Field End Road and Bridle Lane.

St Luke's, Love Lane, Pinner by Francis Xavier Velarde of 1957 (unlisted)

By kind permission of Canon Robert Plourde)

This church by Velarde (1897-1960) is in his distinctive modern Basilican manner, the template for which was set in his innovative and expressionistic churches in the North West, most notably St Monica's, Bootle of 1936 (II) near Liverpool (visited on C20's AGM event in 0214) and English Martyrs, Wallasey of 1952-3 (II*). The latter has been a recent case for the Society because of doubts about its future. Here we have a post-war work in the Romanesque tradition which may have had much input from his partner Richard O'Mahoney as built towards the end of Velarde's life (1960). Twin Rhenish (Rhineland) west towers and windowless front form a German style 'Westwerk' decorated by a low relief statue of St Luke drawing the Virgin and Child by David John, more of whose sculpture can be seen inside. David John was then a young sculptor who worked with Velarde on the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in Blackpool (now in the care of the Historic Chapels Trust – II*) of 1955-7.



This was the first, and the best, of three surviving designs by the practice in Westminster Diocese (the others being St Thérèse of Lisieux, Borehamwood, Herts, 1962-3 and St Edmund, Whitton, 1961-3). A fourth, St Vincent de Paul at Potters Bar, Herts of 1960 has been demolished. St Luke's is well-handled and elegant, with high quality furnishings and finishes. The sanctuary has been reordered but the interior is otherwise little altered. It is one church today where it is also worth looking at the ancillary parish buildings around the church.

Velarde was a Liverpool trained architect who travelled widely. As well as an interest in Spanish and French Romanesque, he was drawn to the North German/Hanseatic tradition of building in brick and his churches all have exposed unadorned brickwork. At St Monica's he began his re-thinking of church design with square brick towers over the narthex or sanctuary, the removal of the choir to a gallery usually at the west end and use of modern sculpture which had all been adopted by the Anglican church in the early 1930's but St Monica's was the first Roman Catholic church to do so.

Pinner Roman Catholic parish was created in 1914 and in 1915 the foundation stone for a new church, designed by Percy Lamb, was laid in Love Lane. In 1957-58 a new and much larger church by F. X. Velarde was built alongside and the old church was saved from demolition and later converted into parish facilities. Velarde was brought in by Fr Wilfrid Trotman ARCM, liturgist and composer (his anthem *Ecce Sacerdotus* was sung in the church at the centenary service in 2014), who wrote: 'while I live, and I am here, I'll have no "repository" art invading this church. Nothing will go in it that has not the approval of the architect' (quoted in *Catholic Herald*, 17 January 1958).

The 1957 *Catholic Herald* describes it as follows:

"The £46,000 building, to seat 350 people, somewhat suggests basilica-type forerunners in the arcading, the [concrete] pillars being bright in their expensive gold mosaic sheathing, the ample bare walling above them stark in its lilac hue. It is the humble simplicity of the nave wall that accentuates the glory of a suspended flat ceiling panelled off in varying shades of blue. Its regal sumptuousness is continued down the sanctuary wall, where behind the altar a great gold cross, really part of the same panelling device, bears the crucified Christ in waxed mahogany [by David John, with swooping angels in the wings of the cross]. The lighting is pleasingly concealed in the ceiling panelling, and for a tester above the altar, Velarde once more teases in his own inimitable manner by giving us four extra concealed panel lights forming a square above the altar-piece.

Since the early days of his St Monica's at Bootle, Velarde has turned his attention, as Pinner shows, more to colour effect, and at Pinner too shows us what can be done with glass. The door separating narthex from nave is a vastness of plate-glass, allowing an impressive view from the street at all times of the gold altar cross and the fenestration is an irregular glazed pattern of panels of slightly differing hues."

The exterior is of pale brown brick laid in English garden wall bond and with roof coverings of copper. The towers are rectangular on plan with round-headed arches to the bell stages and pyramidal roofs. On the side elevations the aisles have continuous multi-paned concrete windows, the panes alternately square and arched and filled with opaque coloured glass, one of the most distinctive features but marred somewhat by secondary glazing. By contrast, the upper parts of the nave wall are completely plain with only small square openings. The east wall is blind.

The interior has a full-height narthex with a top lit baptistery on the south side. This now contains a display of stained glass from the previous church, with St Joseph to the left and St Francis to the right both by Frank Humphreys of 1937 and a newly commissioned piece, depicting St Luke in the centre by Caroline Benyon with symbols of herbal medicine, in a consciously 19th-century style (but there is no other stained glass). A Lady Chapel is on the north side, also top-lit, with a statue of the Mother and Child, also by David John, donated to the church by Velarde. At later periods (1980s-2000s) David John also added the holy water stoups, consecration crosses and a sculpture of the Holy Family in the former baptistery. A modern tabernacle is to be found in the Lady Chapel in black and gold with symbols of the Cross and fishes, and the original font is also present.

The narthex opens into the nave under a wide unmoulded brick arch. The nave has composition flooring decorated with stars, walls of painted brick and a flat panelled timber ceiling with each panel painted in two tones of blue with alternating diamonds and squares. The church retains its original open-backed bench seating. A six-bay nave arcade of unmoulded round arches with incised decorative capitals alternating between chevron and round topped shapes, deriving from Byzantine churches, is carried on concrete columns faced with gold mosaic. The alternation of shapes in the windows, columns and ceiling decoration is a constant theme. The columns have Stations of the Cross affixed to them with the name of the Station written in English. Post-Vatican II reordering has seen the removal of the high altar and the communion rails (illustrated in Little, page 186), but the new furnishings are in keeping with the style of the church.

In 1965 a new parish hall was built behind Velarde's church, a striking modern design by G. H. and G. P. Grima, described by Pevsner in *London 3: North West* as "like a paper dart on a shoebox". In 1986 the old church to right of the church was adapted by Ekkehard Weisner of Keystone architects to serve as a parish centre (Weisner worked with Maguire and Murray on the Lutheran Youth Hostel and Chapel in Thanet and Sandwich Streets, Kings Cross in 1974-8). In 2005 plans were prepared by Anthony Delarue Associates for a grand entrance portico/colonnade at the west front, incorporating ramped access. This was not implemented, and instead a more modest scheme to provide ramped access was prepared in 2007 by Alexander Good. It is important that if such plans are ever revived that C20 society should have an opportunity to comment on them.

All in all, this is a fine church and one of Velarde's best reflecting his use of space, lighting, strong colour and spare fittings to create a harmonious whole inside and out.

[En route to Stanmore, we pass on the left All Saints, Uxbridge Road, Harrow Weald largely by William Butterfield and with fine furnishings by him in two phases 1840's and 1890's.](#)

St William of York, Du Cros Drive, Stanmore Hector Othon Corfiato 1960 (Grade II)

(by kind permission of Father Michael Munnelly)

This is the only listed church we see other than the first one, Our Lady of the Rosary. Its architect of French origin and who trained at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris was very much part of the architectural establishment of the day, Sir Albert Richardson's Deputy at the Bartlett School and then successor to him as Professor of Architecture there. He co-authored with Richardson '*Design in Civil Architecture: Volume 1, Elevational treatments*' (1948). His best known church is the circular

Notre Dame de France in Leicester Place in the West End (of 1955), the plan not liturgical innovation but bequeathed by the site having been a round 'panorama' in the early 19th century. It is filled with modern French art including most famously by Jean Cocteau, commissioned under the aegis of the French Embassy's cultural advisor René Varin. There are other 'national' Catholic post-war churches in London most notably St Boniface in Whitechapel (seen on my East End church tour in October 2014). Corfiato also did the Convent chapel for the sisters of the Adoration Reparatrice in Beaufort St, Chelsea.

St William of York was commissioned for an affluent suburb by a priest wanting the neo-Romanesque style and he got a very refined version of it. Its most striking and memorable feature is its almost art deco baldachino of bulbous banded columns in alternating black and gold which supported what Proctor describes as a "hat-like confection over the high altar", an arcaded canopy with scalloped hanging cloth and tassels (not trompe l'oeil plaster as it would be in Italy). In *Building the Modern Church* Proctor points to the necessity of having some form of canopy over the high altar but this is an unusual solution when more commonly a suspended structure or corona often in metal was erected. The listing description states that (Corfiato) designed few buildings and describes it "as an elegant design in which every element has a consistency of approach, and every detail is carefully crafted. It is the more notable for being little altered, as an example of RC architecture immediately before Vatican II".

The parish was created in 1938 and a site in Du Cros Drive was acquired for a church in 1939, but it was only after the end of building licences in 1954 that work could begin on the new site. A house was built for the parish priest in 1955 (to the left), and work began on the church on 5 October 1959. The foundation stone was laid on 7 June 1960. The parish hall adjoining the church to the right is a later addition.

It has a gaunt tower, with a double row of windows up the left-hand side and a Christ on the Cross at front upper left. To the right is the triple arched entrance set back from the road with stone columns separating the doors up to the top of lintel height then widening brick above. A pair of rather old-fashioned looking lamp standards are placed in front on stone plinths. Above five small square windows are punched into the facade. The three doors under the arches have finely crafted handles. The facing bricks are two inch brown Bovington bricks from Herts. The (liturgical) south aisle elevation is worth seeing, with the semi-circular projection of the baptistery, with copper roof and clerestory of windows on the curve. Beyond another row of five square windows and high above 9 round-arched ones, a profile reminiscent of George Pace in its sculptural simplicity. The Sanctuary is illuminated by four horizontal rows of three round-arched windows.

Entering the church, the narthex has a curved screen to the right, its yellow square motif repeating that of the tympana and giving on to the former baptistery, which retains a large stone font with incised decoration and wooden cover - despite having been adapted as a book shop. To left is a water stoup, and stairs with simple steel balustrade and hardwood handrail lead to the balcony. All the doors in the Narthex and throughout the building have small inset glazed panels akin to the window motif.

The nave has a shallow curved ceiling has inset circular lights in rows decorated with plaster reliefs of the four Evangelists at the four corners, almost unnoticeable at first as not delineated by colour.

Shallow long timber benches provide seating, complemented by timber altar rails with twisted balusters. Stations of the Cross line the brick walls. The Gallery at the West end has been adapted as a meeting room and choir gallery, with sliding glass windows and now containing the organ. Steps lead in two flights to the high altar, still set under Corfiato's elaborate baldachino (the marble nave altar in front is an addition of 2001) described above. Altar has unmoulded columns within simple square framework, and fittings for example candlesticks that match the baldachino (designed by Corfiato). Seen through it, a crucifix on the bare rear wall of unrelieved brickwork. Pulpit is to the right with crucifix above – another feature that is often now removed in churches of this date.

A round headed arcade with squat concrete Doric columns separates aisle and the Chapel of the Sacred Heart and Lady Chapel at its east end, with above it the former choir gallery. This has round-arched openings separated by a central column, and infilled by an ironwork screen. Side altars are set in the blind arcading. Confessionals of reeded timber and match boarding are to be found at the west end of the aisle.

This is a fine church by an accomplished architect with some alterations made but with most fittings intact, the major change as at almost all the churches we have seen, the gated baptistery falling out of use (here converted to a shop), choir gallery no longer used as such and some alteration to the Sanctuary. It reinforces the idea that Historic England often feel more comfortable with well-known architects, but who built little (so rarity value) in a fairly traditional style but well-crafted in a parish with the funds to pay for such a church. However, I hope to have proved that at least four other Catholic churches in West and NW London equally merit consideration for listing, provided a not too inflexible attitude is taken to what might be a movable fitting.



St Thomas More, Maresfield Gardens, Swiss Cottage Gerard Goalen 1968 (unlisted)

(by kind permission of Father Stefan Hnylycia)

This is an additional church to see before the 6.00pm Mass for those with the stamina en route back to London by, Gerard Goalen whose work we have already seen at St Gregory (but this is a drop-off point, take all your belongings with you if leaving the coach). It was built in the back garden of the former house of the society painter, Philip de László, whose studio became the previous church in 1938 (and is now the parish hall). The elliptical galleried interior is impressive, with well-handled concrete detailing suited to its urban site in comparison to St Gregory the Great where the site was more generous.

The new church opened in December 1968 but not consecrated by Cardinal Basil Hume until 1977. The old church was converted on completion of the new into a parish hall. Goalen's name is on the Foundation Stone at the entrance but this needs some repair (in the 1998 C20 Church Gazetteer this church was attributed to Goodhart Rendel which is clearly an error and which will be corrected).



The

Interior of St Thomas More, Swiss Cottage looking towards Sanctuary with Crucifix by David John and glass by Whitefriars

The church occupies a restricted site, which dictated the form of the building. It is elliptical in plan with the longer sides to north and south. The approach from the Finchley Road is up a steep flight of steps (Trinity Walk) and the church is sandwiched between the presbytery and the church hall, which obscure most of the front of the building, perhaps why it is not better known. At the top of the steps is a broad flat-roofed porch with a concrete bellcote above. The body of the church is of red brick with a heavy concrete clerestory and what appears to be a flat roof.

Internally, the walls are of bare-faced brown brick with ornamental brickwork to the lower part apparently intended to improve the acoustic. Eighteen slim concrete piers, which form the most dramatic part of the interior, support the timber gallery along the south (entrance) side, continuing up to the clerestory and finally to massive reinforced concrete rafters running west-east so counter-acting the lateral emphasis of the elliptical form. It will be no surprise that the consultant engineers were Ove Arup. The forcefulness of the concrete is relieved by the brick relief surfaces of the lower walls and by the pattern of circular gallery roof lights supplementing the more even lighting from the clerestory.

The slightly sloping floor is concrete with terrazzo finish to the passageways. The altar is raised on marble steps against the north wall. Three clerestory windows above the sanctuary are filled with abstract stained glass by Alfred R. Fisher of Whitefriars Studios. The remaining clerestory windows are clear-glazed. The fittings include a bronze and steel crucifix by David John whose work we saw at St Luke's, Pinner on the wall behind the sanctuary. The stone font with wooden top is set back on the North side of the sanctuary but not as in the slightly earlier churches we have seen in a separate gated baptistry and appears to remain in use.

St Thomas More is close to Swiss Cottage Station on the Jubilee line (running today) and Finchley Rd (Jubilee and Metropolitan lines) as well as many bus routes.



Entrance to St Thomas More, Swiss Cottage

Conclusion

I hope this event has given participants a foretaste of the innovation and power of Catholic churches of the late 1950's and 1960's in one part of London, their urgent need for better heritage protection (which for example prevents them from benefiting from HLF schemes for church or roof repair). There are more to discover particularly in London's outer suburbs and the Home Counties which I

hope to visit on future events. Our AGM this year will be held at 11.00 am on Saturday, 13 June in the parish hall of Burles Newton & Partners (designed by John Newton) St Aloysius , Phoenix St, Somers Town (close to Euston Station) with an opportunity to see the elliptical church with fittings by Kossowski, Gordon Bedingfield and stained glass by Goddard and Gibbs and Whitefriars afterwards.

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Twentieth Century Society

April 2015



St Raphael, Yeading

