

History of St. Matthew's Church, Rushall



To the People of Rushall

This Church is the common heritage of us all in the village. Our forefathers built it and beautified it, and have handed it on to us to care for, so that in due time we may pass it on to those who follow.

But the Church is not to be cared for only as a precious relic; it is a place of living associations. Many of us and our children were christened here; many of us were married here. Here all are able to find peace and strength in Worship and Prayer, and here many of our friends and relations have finally been laid to rest.

It was thus in the days of our fathers, it will be thus in the days of our children. We all have our part in, and responsibility for, this church and can turn to it in times of greatest need.

We ask all to extend a helpful hand in some way to ensure that the Church is handed on in good order.

To Our Visitors

It may be that you would like to know something of the history of this, our Parish Church.

St. Matthew's, Rushall, first appears in history in 1086 as a dependency of the Upavon monastic cell established by the great abbey of St. Wandrille de Fontenelle, near Rouen. All that survives from that church is the twelfth century octagonal font with its sixteen blind arches, placed on what is probably a reused late Norman capital.

The church was 'rebuilt' in 1332, and from this rebuilding survive the chancel arch, two windows rest in the north wall, the nave buttresses, and the western section of the north wall of the nave. The graveyard was later consecrated in 1402.



Of the tree bells now hanging in the tower the treble was founded at Salisbury, probably about 1400; the second bell dates to 1606 and the third to 1740. The existing tower, with some notable gargoyles and a panelled arch facing the nave, was added in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. To the fifteenth century also belong the glass fragments in the south eastern window of the chancel; it is possible to discern fragments of a Madonna and Child and of a Crucifixion. There is a particularly interesting contemporary stained glass memorial window by R. E. Buss in the north wall of the nave, depicting in great detail the life and work of the Four Seasons.

The benches, with their traceried ends, were added in the sixteenth century, and the small memorial panel in the south wall with the two shields is Elizabethan.



The parochial registers started in 1651, and the series is complete since that date. The family chapel to the north (now used as a vestry), with its underlying crypt, was added by the Poore family in 1789 and contains a memorial to Edward Poore.



Extensive rebuilding, easily distinguished by being in brick, took place in 1812. Further restoration took place in 1873, when the chancel roof was remodelled, and in 1905.

We hope that you have found a brief rest here in this Church, and pray that on your lives you will find that of which this rest is merely a symbol, the 'peace of God, which passeth all understanding'.

Source: Text by St. Matthew's Church.