

THE RESTORATION OF HENBURY CHURCH

The ancient parish church of Henbury, having been completely restored at a cost of between £5000 and £6000, was re-opened for divine service yesterday morning, when the Lord Bishop of the diocese preached, and there was a crowded congregation.

The interior of the church now presents a very fine and handsome appearance; the long row of Norman columns, surmounted with arches of the Early English style of architecture, which separate the nave from the aisles, the arched roof of moulded oak, the artistic design of the richly stained glass windows and the many elaborate sculptured marble monuments which cover the walls, serve to make Henbury church as imposing a structure as is possessed by any rural parish church in the county of Gloucester. The church is one of considerable antiquity, its register dating back to the year 1538; and the restoration having been entrusted to Mr Street R.A, is a sufficient guarantee that the work is indeed what it is professed to be – a restoration, all the details of the style of architecture originally employed having been faithfully preserved. Commenced in the autumn of 1875, the work has been carried forward gradually, so as to interfere as little as possible with the conduct of divine service; but as the work progressed, it was found necessary to rebuild from the foundation the south and part of the east walls of the chancel.

The east window, which takes the place of a small seventeenth century window, is entirely new and it has been filled with stained glass by Mr Daniel Bell of Henrietta Street, Cavendish Square London, who is now preparing a window of the same character to replace the old lancet window at the south end of the communion table. The east window of the south chapel of the chancel has been filled with Munich glass, and the two south windows are by Messrs Clayton and Bell.

The church has been re-seated with open oak seats of modern form. The new pulpit and reredos are the work of Mr Earpe (sic), sculptor, of Lambeth, and have been produced from drawings prepared by Mr Street; and the organ, which was erected by Mr G P England, of London, has been restored and rearranged by Mr Vowles of this city. A brass eagle lectern has been introduced, and this, with the stained glass windows and other specialities, has been presented by different inhabitants of the parish. The contractors were Messrs Wall and Hook of Brinscombe, near Stroud.

The church bells rang merry peals during the early morning, and a profuse display of flags in the immediate neighbourhood of the church betokened the auspicious event of the day. At half past eleven o'clock, the hour fixed for the commencement of the service, the church was filled, all the leading residents of Henbury and the surrounding districts being present. Amongst those whom we observed were Sir John Davis Bart, Mr E Sampson, Mr Kruger Miles, Mr F W Savage, Mr C W Savage, Mr W H Harford, Mr C Hill, Captain Parsons etc

The choir and the clergy entered the church by the west door, singing the processional hymn "Onward Christian Soldiers". The clergy consisting of the Rev J H Way, the vicar, Rev W H Bromley Way, Duntsbourn near Cirencester, Rev H B Heberden, Stapleton, Rev S Tebbs (*window 713, installed 1907*), Rev H H Hardy, Horfield, Rev J Mackie, Filton, Rev J E Hawksley, curate of Henbury, Rev J B Bence, Rev E J Harford, Bathford, Rev J E Nash, Rev David Wright, Stoke Bishop (*first vicar of Stoke Bishop and brother in law of the Tebbs – window 713*). Rev S Williams, curate of Horfield, Rev H G de Bunsen, Rev G W Bence, Bishopston, Rev C Barnwell, curate of Henbury. The Rev D Wright read the prayers, the vicar of the Parish the first and the Rev Bromley Way the second lesson, the Rev E Harford read the epistle and the vicar the Gospel.

The Bishop took for his text part of the 31st verse of the 24th chapter of St Luke, "Their eyes were open and they knew him."

[During his homily he also pointed out that there was still £500 outstanding in the building fund and a collection was made at the end of the service for that fund]

At the afternoon service Rev Harford of Bathford preached.