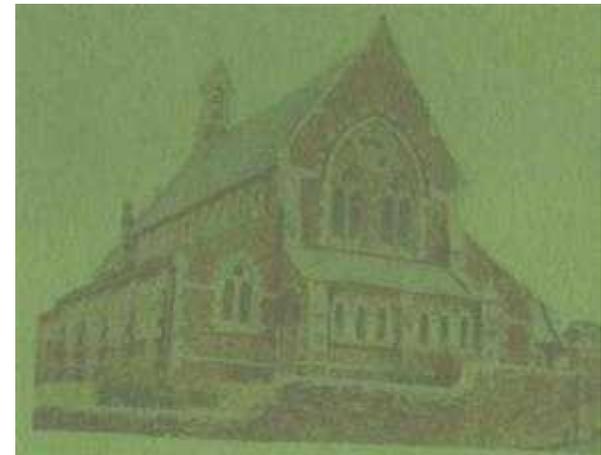


# HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

WESTWARD Ho!

A GUIDE



## **The Beginnings.**

The church of Holy Trinity is bound up with the history of Westward Ho!.

Starting in 1863 the Northam Burrows (North Devon) and Villa Building Company Limited was formed with the object of founding a fashionable seaside place to rival Ilfracombe and Torquay.

In 1864 Lord Portsmouth laid the foundation stone of the Westward Ho! Hotel (later called The Royal and then The Golden Bay). This hotel opened a year later. The Bath Hotel, opened in 1867, it had an indoor swimming pool downstairs and a large ballroom above. Several new villas and a large terrace of houses were also constructed.

Although the company had issued a prospectus of the development with an orderly street plan, they had no control over the haphazard way in which the resort expanded. Matters were made worse by the Bideford to Appledore Railway, laid in 1901, cutting the village in two, running through the present car park towards the cliffs.

Following the Napoleonic and Crimean Wars, many retired and half-pay naval and army officers were attracted by the inexpensive property prices and the proximity of the north Devon Golf Club.

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This edition By Jim Ashman March 2017

Although the area was part of the parish of Northam there were only three farms, Youngaton (part of the farmhouse still exist as The Village Inn), Venton and Underborough. The latter two still stand in Golf Links Road. However, with the villa's being built, the population was growing and it was a long walk on muddy tracks to St. Margaret's Northam!

The Revd. Issac Gossett, who had been at St. Margaret's since 1844, saw the need for a church at Westward Ho!. So with the necessary ecclesiastical permission, he commissioned a Mr. W. Oliver, an architect from Barnstaple, to draw up some plans. The site at the bottom of Fosketh Hill was donated by The North Devon Building Company and work started in 1868.

On the 24\* March 1870, the church opened but not yet Consecrated as it was in debt. Mr J.C.Tremear of Bideford was the builder, at a cost of £1800, plus £450 for the internal fittings. These fittings consisted of a prayer desk, lectern, altar, and 400 chairs. (At the time much more floor space was available for these chairs as there was no organ, screened-off chapel, font, or choir stalls).

The opening service was by ticket only and 600 were issued. The collection on the day raised £50. The whole cost of the construction had been personally under-written

by the Revd. Gosset. Later that year he retired and was eventually repaid after many fund raising events and generous donations by the congregation. The service was conducted by William Temple, Lord Bishop of Exeter (later Archbishop of Canterbury) and an extract for the Bideford Weekly Gazette of 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1870 gives details.



## The Church Building

On entering the church you will perhaps be surprised by the wonderful lightness. Most of the windows are of plain glass and the east window, behind the altar, allows the light to flood in. The windows on the north side also give much light and views of the sea.

The basic structure of the church has hardly been altered since its completion on 1870. The external dressing around the windows and doors are of Lundy granite, and the facing of the external walls is of the brownish stone from the Kenwith Valley quarries and was a gift from the Revd. Edward Dansey, the Rector of Abbotsham.

The carving of conventional foliage around the capitals of the chancel pillars and the corbels outside was carried out by Mr Harry Hems. There are two heads outside the west window, an unidentified king and a bishop, signifying the connection between the Church of England and the Crown, two winged angles outside the east window and what appear to be very badly weathered animals on the south porch doorway. The nave aisle are floored with local tiles from Torridge Works, Bideford, while those in the chancel are encaustic tiles supplied by a Mr. W. Whitstone of Colville, Leicestershire. The bell turret over the chancel arch once again holds two bells, some years ago one of the bells had become damaged, but after much fund raising the bell was re-hung in 2004, and now we can be welcomed to worship by their pleasant sound.

The harmonium was replaced by the present organ in 1884, built by W.G. Vowles of Bristol, and the choir stalls were also added at this time. The reredos depicts the ascension as its central panel, flanked by St. James, St. Peter, St. Andrew and St. John. The outer panels form the memorial for the parishioners who died in the Great War. There are 31 names in total.



## **The United Services College**

In 1874 the college was founded by a company made up of army officers. The first headmaster was Cormell Price, who received a B.A. in 1859, an M.A. in 1865, and became a Bachelor of Civil Law in 1867. The college was for the boarders mainly the sons of naval and army officers and colonial civil servants. Its main objective was to prepare the boys for entry into the services.

The college took over a development of 12 large terrace houses which were, at the time, standing vacant. The houses were adapted to accommodate about 200 boys. Rudyard Kipling, who had been one of the college pupils, immortalised "The Col" in his book *Stalky and Co.* and described the school as "twelve bleak houses by the sea", (now flats called Kipling Terrace). It remained here until 1904 and during those years used Holy Trinity as its chapel. Their Roll of Honour was donated to the church and it is displayed in the centre of the south windows.

The title page says:- "This book records the names of the Old Boys of the U.S.C. who gave their lives for their King and Country. Their name liveth for evermore".

163 names are listed under separate sections, Asia to 1900, South Africa to 1903, The Great war 1914 to 1918 and 1939-1945 including many D.S.O's M.C.'s recorded in gold ink.

A page is turned each week so that we remember and honour the many boys who worshipped here and made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.

Close beside the Roll of Honour is a Boer War shell case converted into a flower vase - a symbol of peace and hope.

The stained glass windows behind were given as part of the memorial to Cormell Price who died in 1910. It depicts Saints George, Andrew and Patrick. A brass wall tablet also commemorates Cormell Price, the boys of the Junior School and the College boys.

The large "bishops" oak chair in the sanctuary was presented in memory of the last headteacher, The revd. F.W. Tracy. The arms of the college are carved on the back of the chair.

## **The Side Chapel**

The side chapel on the south side was a gift from the congregation in thanksgiving for the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 1937. It is now used for weekly services and for private prayer during other services.

After the end of the 1939/45 war it was dedicated as a memorial to those who fell in that war. On a wooden tablet on the east wall there are 17 names recorded including two young women in the W.R.N.S. and a Victoria Cross holder. The two stained glass windows were added depicting St. Michael and St. George.



### **Highgate School**

This north London boys public school, moved to Westward Ho! In September 1939 to avoid the expected air raids. The numbers varied over time, but pupils and staff often exceeded 500. They used many local buildings some of which still exist today. The Sunshine cafe (now Tesco's) became classrooms, Kingsley Hall was their gymnasium, Buckleigh Place (on the site which is now College Close), Torr ridge House (now Kingsley Court), Merley (now the Pier House), "Top Camp" (now a housing estate), Ennisfame, Youngaton (now the Village Inn), Pebbleridge Hotel (now a housing estate), and several others. The school used Holy Trinity Church for voluntary church parades every Sunday, though they held their Christmas Carol Service at Northam.

On the 15th December 1991 a party of old boys, who had been evacuated here, came to hold a service in the church and presented a large Revised English Bible, which can be seen on a reading desk just behind the pulpit.

### Centenary and Curates

In 1970 a big celebration was held to mark 100 years since the original opening of the church. The preacher was the Bishop of Exeter, Dr. Robert Mortimer. The priest in charge was then the revd. Gordon Howlees (Curate of Northam 1967-71). Usually the curate from Northam looked after the church and resided in Golf Links Road in the Clergy house. At least two of them, during the late 1970's supplemented their remuneration by serving in the Pebbleridge Pub, and were usually known as "the Vicar of Westward Ho!", and they used to say that this was their pastoral work!

### Memorials

There are many memorial plaques dedicated to loyal servants of Holy Trinity Church. Some are remembered by pieces of Bideford pottery in the form of jugs and bowls which decorate the window embrasures.

### Memorial Garden

Although the church was consecrated in 1938, the surrounding ground was not. After many years of campaigning, the District Church Council was granted a faculty in April 2005 to create a Memorial Garden against the wall adjoining Fosketh Hill, on the south side of the church. This area has been consecrated by the Bishop, and there is provision for the burial of ashes with suitable commemorative stone tablets. The concrete pathway provides access to this area.

### Furniture and Decorations

The fine refectory table at the back of the church, used for distribution of hymn books was the gift of the Revd. and Mrs L.C. Mallett They had retired to Westward Ho! after he was Rural Dean of Hartland.

The three shields on the west wall represent.



The Holy Trinity (Deus Pater, Deus Filius, Deus Spiritus)

The arms of the Exeter Diocese (Keys and Sword)



and the arms of the Sea of Canterbury



The modern wood carving of Christ The Good Shepherd, by Eric Collingwood of Northam, is in a south window embrasure! !br0ken!!

The Revd. David Chance, a previous vicar, donated his painting of the church cleared of chairs, when he moved on in 1963. It hangs on a pillar on the north side.

In an embrasure on the south side is a statuette of the Virgin Mary and Child which has the inscription: "In Memoriam William Acton Adams. Aged 20. Lost in the wreck of the S.S. Trehawk in the Strait of Magellan, April 1925"

On a pillar on the north side is a wall hanging made by Mrs M Durkin and presented in 2016. It shows the disciples large catch of fish (John 21 VI-14).

### **The Millennium Window**

To mark the millennium a new stained glass window was created in the right west wall. A list of the names of the subscribers hangs nearby.

### **The Future**

In 1966 the church became formally part of the Torridge Estuary Team Ministry and also a "District Church". In March 2015 the Mission Community of Appledore, Northam and Westward Ho! was created, and in March 2017, Holy Trinity became a Parish Church in its own right, within the newly created parish of Westward Ho!.

### **Church Activities**

The building itself having no fixed pews is very adaptable for a variety of purposes. We stage concerts and exhibitions throughout the year and these have proved extremely popular, generating revenue for the church.

Next to the church is a large hall which was put in place in 1930. This is regularly used and plays an important part in the life of the church and the local community. In addition to coffee after Sunday services, various clubs, including bridge, canasta, accordion and various other groups meet there. Each year there are Harvest suppers and other organised events are also held there.

### **The Victoria Cross**

The Victoria Cross is recognised as the worlds most coveted medal for bravery. We are proud to record the names of two boys from the United services College who went on to receive this prestigious award. Lt Col. D.A. Seagrim, whose name appears on the plaque in the Side Chapel. The details given here are from "The Register of the Victoria Cross" by kind permission of the Editor, This England, Alma House, Rodney Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 1HT.

Francis Aylmer Maxwell. Lieutenant (later Brigadier General)  
Indian Staff Corps.

Other Decorations CSI, DSO & Bar

Date of Gazette 8<sup>th</sup> March 1901

Place/Date of Birth Guildford, Surrey 7<sup>th</sup> September 1871

Place/Date of Death Ypres, Belgium 21<sup>st</sup> September 1917

Other memorials Ypres Reservoir Cemetery, Belgium

St. Giles, Cathedral, Edinburgh

On 31<sup>st</sup> March 1900 at Korn Spruit, South Africa, Lt Maxwell carried out the self-imposed duty of saving the guns. He went out on five different occasions and helped to bring in two guns and three limbers, one of which he, another officer and some gunners dragged in by hand. He also went out with two other officers and tried to get the last gun in and remained there until the attempt had to be abandoned. During a previous campaign, (the Chitral Expedition 1895) he had removed the body of a lieutenant colonel of the Corps of Guides, under fire. Had shown conspicuous bravery on other occasions.

Anketell Moutray Read, Captain 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The  
Northamptonshire Regiment

Date of Gazette 18<sup>th</sup> November 1915

Place/Date of Birth Bampton, Devon 27<sup>th</sup> October 1884

Place/Date of Death Hulloch, France 25<sup>th</sup> September  
1915

Other memorials Dud Comer Cemetery, France War  
Memorial, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire  
Bampton Church, Devon

On 25 September 1915 near Hulloch, France, Captain Read, although partially gassed, went out several times in order to rally parties of different units which were disorganised and retiring. He led them back into the firing line and regardless of danger to himself, moved about under withering fire, encouraging them, but he was mortally wounded while carrying out this gallant work.

He had shown conspicuous bravery on other occasions, particularly on the night of 29.30<sup>th</sup> July when he carried out of action an officer who was mortally wounded, under fire of rifle and grenades.

Derek Anthony Seagrim, Lieutenant Colonel, Commander of 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Green Howards.  
(his name appears on the plaque in the side chapel)  
Date of Gazette 13<sup>th</sup> May 1943  
Place/Date of Birth Bournemouth, 24<sup>th</sup> September 1903  
Place/Date of Death Tunisia 6<sup>th</sup> April 1943  
Memorials Sfax War Cemetery, Tunisia  
War Memorial and Whissonset  
Church Norfolk

On 20/21 March 1943 at the Mareth Line, Tunisia, Lieutenant Colonel Seagrim's courage and leadership led directly to the capture of an important objective. When it appeared that the attack on the position would fail owing to the intensity of enemy fire, he placed himself at the head of his battalion and led them forward. He personally helped to place a scaling ladder over an anti-tank ditch and was the first across. Leading an attack on two machine-gun posts, he accounted for 20 of the enemy and when a counter-attack was launched next day he moved from post to post quite unperturbed, until it was defeated.  
(The only instance to date of the Victoria Cross and the George Cross being awarded to the same family. Lt Col Seagrim's brother, Major H.P. Seagrim was posthumously awarded the GC for gallantry in Burma, during the period February 1843 to February 1944).

### **The Reverend Charles Kingsley**

Although Westward Ho! Is named after the novel by the Revd. Charles Kingsley he has no real connection with the village. He wrote this work of fiction whilst staying in Bideford in 1855. It is the story of the adventures of Amyas Leigh who lives at Burrough Court, Northam and begins in the year 1575. There are many references to places in this area. Bideford is described as "the little white town". The surrounding area as "Where Torridge joins her sister Taw and both flow together quietly towards the surges of the bar and the everlasting thunder of long Atlantic swell. Pleasantly the old town stands there beneath soft Italian sky, fanned day and night by fresh ocean breeze, which forbids alike the keen winter frosts and the fierce thunder heats of the Midlands".

When Amyas Leigh comes down to the ocean it is described thus "He walked down to the pebble ridge where the surges of the bay have defeated their own fury, by rolling up in the course of ages a rampart of grey boulder stone. Some two miles long as cunningly curved and smoothed and fitted, as if the work had been done by human hands, which protects from the high tides of spring and autumn a fertile sheet of smooth alluvial turf".

The novel was extremely popular and therefore the Northam Burrows (North Devon) Hotel and Villa Building Company Limited decided to use the name for their development.

## **Joseph Rudyard Kipling**

Kipling, whose parents lived in India, was sent to the United Services College in Westward Ho! In 1878 when he was 12 years old. Along with the other boys he worshipped in this church each Sunday. His book *Stalky & Co.* is the story of three boys at “The Coll”, and is based on his years here. Many other wonderful books followed and he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907.

Kipling was a great patriot and he became a War Graves Commissioner following the First World War. He was instrumental in having an unknown soldier buried in Westminster Abbey. He also set up the ceremony at the Menin Gate, Belgium, where the last post is sounded every evening.

To coincide with national Poetry Day 1995, the BBC conducted a poll to discover the nation's favourite poem. Rudyard Kipling's “If” emerged a clear winner. At the final count it received twice as many votes as the runner up.

However, even if you have never read any of Kipling's books or poems, you will still be aware of some of his words. “There name liveth for evermore” and “Lest we forget” found on many war memorials are perhaps his finest.

This church is not just stones with stained glass and a collection of memorials. It is the meeting place for a group of people who gather for praise, prayer and fellowship, and enjoy many social events together.

We hope you enjoy a visit to our church and extend a warm welcome to you to come and join us in any, or all, of our activities.

