

P. The Polhill hatchments to be found high up at the back of the church, date from the 18th and 19th C. They are the funeral arms of the deceased, each for a different member of the Polhill family of the day. They would have been carried during the funeral procession, or hung in the Church or the home during the funeral. The Pollhill arms can be found in each of them.

Q. The Bells. There is a peal of six bells. Two originate from the 17th Century but have been recast along with four new ones in 2000 by the Whitechapel Foundry. They are a generous gift in memory of the late Joan Dickinson.

What's on at St Bart's?

In this church we have a regular monthly pattern of worship. Our Sunday services are Holy Communion at 8am, Family worship or Communion at 10am and a formal sung Evensong twice a month at 6.30pm. There is also a service of Holy Communion each Wednesday at 10am.

For children and young people we have a Sunday school, messy church, youth groups and EPIC.

These all occur as part of our rich annual pattern of seasonal services and events.

There are many other things to take part in both as part of and separate from services. We have our Home Groups, bell ringers, flower arrangers, men's group, band and robed choir.

For further details contact the Church Office or the Vicar. The church website and monthly magazine are also good sources of up to date information.

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General structure and history

The earliest record of a church here is in the Textus Roffensis of 1115, a copy of a much earlier document. This together with the fact that Otford is a Saxon village, means we can be sure there has been a place of worship here since Saxon times.

The first church would have been built of wood but it was replaced by a stone building about the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066. The north and west walls, which are made of flint and Kentish ragstone with a chalk and rubble infill and even some Roman pottery, are all that remain from this era.

Over the centuries the building has been modified and extended to suit the style of worship and size of the congregation of the day. A tower with very thick walls was added in about 1185 and topped with a shingled spire in the 15thC and its beams are thought to date from then. The Chancel was enlarged and the south aisle built in the 14thC. This aisle later underwent some rebuilding and was also extended to form the Lady Chapel in the late 15thC. Local Reigate stone features prominently in these phases.

Tradition has it that there was a damaging fire in the early 1600s and a new roof and other repairs were needed. The porch on the west side of the tower has the date 1637 and probably marks the completion of the repairs.

In 1863 a major restoration and reordering project was undertaken by the eminent Victorian architect G.E. Street. The main altar was moved to its present position and the west gallery removed. The window edges were restored and the wooden Nave pillars replaced with Bath stone. The present pews and pulpit were also added replacing those of the Georgian era.

The Church rooms were built in 2006-7 to provide an office, kitchen and toilet facilities and space for groups to meet. Green oak and Purbeck stone are conspicuous building materials internally and traditional brick and tiles outside. The tower has also been recently restored and coated with traditional lime render.

The Church of St. Bartholomew Otford



To all our visitors, we invite you to pause and experience the peace of God in this place where worship and prayer have been offered for over a thousand years.

Inside

A. The Pews and pulpit. The deal pews with their doors and the pulpit were installed in 1863

The Chandeliers. Most of the brass chandeliers were installed in 1912.

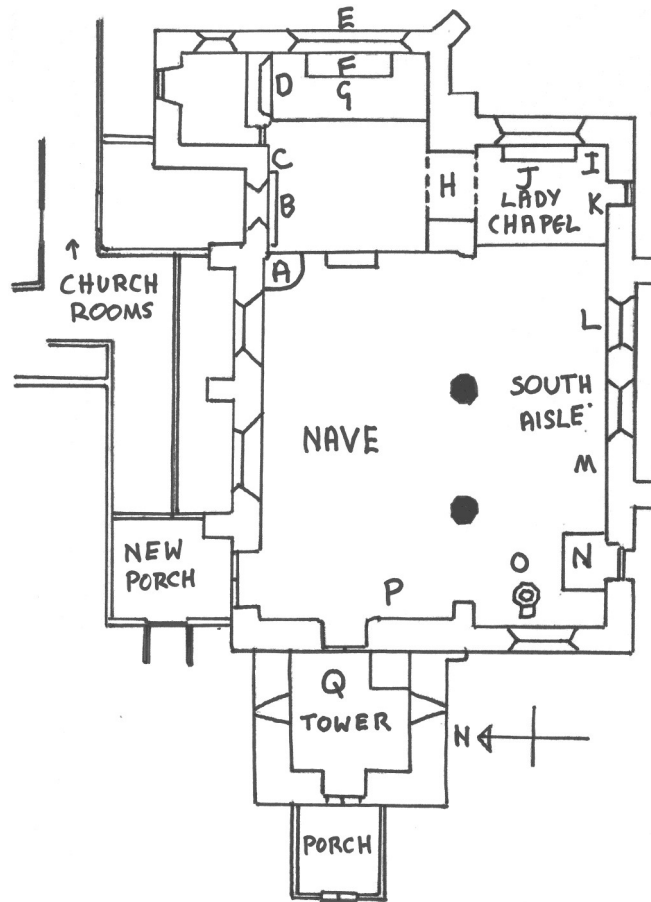
They are still in use for candlelit services during the Christmas season.

B. The Memorials. The largest of these in the chancel, to Charles Polhill, who died 1755, is by Sir Henry Cheere. Charles was a merchant tailor at Smyrna and later a Commissioner of Excise in London. Charles is shown with his wife, Martha, above, flanked by Faith with a Bible and Hope with an anchor and posy. There are several other memorials to the family, former vicars and other notables in the Church, in particular Charles' brother David who was an MP. Both were great grandsons of Oliver Cromwell.

C. The Funerary Helmet. This Elizabethan helmet belonged to a member of the Polhill family and has a crest in the Polhill colours. It would have been carried in the funeral procession.

D. The Easter sepulchre is made of Caen stone and dates from early 16th C, and is one of the finest in Kent. Although much damaged it is possible to see the pomegranate which was the badge of Catherine of Aragon, and a Tudor rose. The inclusion of these symbols may be connected to the visit of Henry and Catherine to Otford on 1520 on the way to the Field of the Cloth of gold in France. There is a small ledge on the right which represents Christ's empty tomb.

E. The East window frame is Victorian stonework based on the 14thC original. The cross of painted glass in the central window is believed to be of the 17th century from the Low Countries and depicts the Crucifixion and several saints, including St Bartholomew and was



brought back from Italy by a member of the Polhill family. It was shattered by a German bomb in 1940 and painstakingly restored by the then Vicar, Rev Elder, in 1947. Other 17th century glass can be seen in the window by the pulpit and the east window of the Lady Chapel.

F. The Reredos behind the altar is late Victorian and made mostly of Caen stone, backed further by carved wood. The cross is alabaster and some detail is picked out in gilding, and red and blue paint.

G. The Altar Frontal There is a set of frontals, each in a different liturgical colours appropriate to each church season. The two newest, those of white and green, were worked by members of the congregation.

H. The Organ. Built in 1913, has two manuals and 19 speaking stops, and is by Spurden Rutt & Co.

I. The Sepulchral slabs were dug up from the church yard in the 1980s and are made of Kentish rag stone. They date to c. 1200AD and may have covered the graves of the children of local wealthy family.

J. The Floor slabs. A large number of slabs were moved to the floor of the east end of the south aisle or the tower during the work carried out by Street in the 1860s. Some are indecipherable but several carry the unusual family name of Hogsflesh.

K. The Lamb window. This roundel came from the tin church in Twitton at the west end of Otford which was erected in 1900 and in use until 1983 when the glass was moved to St. Bartholomew's.

L. The Stained glass windows in the south wall, are both 19th century by Hardman and his nephew. One shows the raising of Jairus' daughter and the other Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalen in the garden after His resurrection and includes the empty grave clothes at the top of the window above the holy table.

M. The Royal coat of arms as at 1697 and combining the Stuart Arms and those of William of Orange, had to be displayed after the restoration of Charles II to show the Sovereign was the head of the C of E.

N. The Royal coat of arms of the House of Windsor at the south door dated 1935, commemorates the silver jubilee of George V.

O. The Font. The present Victorian font of Caen stone replaced the earlier wooden one. The ornate wooden lid is from the time of Charles I. Its place by the door emphasises it is here that the Christian journey begins when we are welcomed into the family of Christ in baptism.