



*Welcome to St Peter's Parish Church, Ash  
A Short Tour With our compliments.*

*The Community of St Peter's. Ash is called to  
Celebrate. live and Reflect the Love of God in Jesus Christ*

The parish church of St Peter's, Ash in the Diocese of Guildford lies to the north side of the Hogs Back, sited on a natural rise in the land.

### **History:**

The parish of Ash today is quite a lot smaller, geographically, than in earlier times and was formerly part of the Diocese of Winchester, but with the formation of the Diocese of Guildford in 1927, St Peter's became one of the 163 parishes under its protection.

A church, possibly wooden in construction, is recorded in the Domesday Book. The landowner at the time, was Azor an Anglo Saxon (he probably did not side with Harold as he still held his title to the land post 1066).

Azor gifted his lands, including the church to the Abbot of Chertsey in return for prayers for his soul. Over the next 500 years, Royal Houses changed, King and Barons signed the Magna Carta, civil war between the Houses of York and Lancaster devastated the country. All this time, Chertsey Abbey received tithes and taxes from the parish and had the right to appoint the priest in charge.

Under Henry VIII, monasteries and abbeys were demolished and their lands and wealth were confiscated for the Crown. So for a short period of time, St Peter's, Ash was Crown property.

During Edward VI's reign, the Crown wished to extend the hunting area to Windsor castle and as the land that they required for this extension belonged to the very powerful landlord, Winchester College, an exchange of land between the Crown and the College was effected and Ash became the property of Winchester College. Our Patron to this day is Winchester College. We are part of the Diocese of Guildford but when matters such as the appointment of a new incumbent or changes to the St Peter's boundaries arise, we must consult our patron.

### **The Church Building:**

The building listed in the Domesday Book as part of the valuation carried by William's tax gatherers was listed under "Henley by Ashe" and was probably of wooden construction. The Norman construction of flint and stone dates back to 1170 and provided a fine Norman door entrance leading into the nave, the priest accessed the chancel via the small door in the south wall.

Nothing of great note was changed to this flint and stone building until the 16<sup>th</sup> century when a stone tower was added to the west end of the church and a porch was erected over the Norman doorway.

The tower contained a ring of 4 bells which were rung from the ground floor area. During the Georgian period a gallery was built to the rear of the nave and housed the original organ.

This gallery was demolished by the Victorians when a very major extension to the north side of the church was made, creating a new nave and chancel, an organ chamber and a clergy vestry. This extension saw the demolition of the old north wall and the creation of the columns that now run centrally, east to west through the building.

The bells were raised and the ringing chamber was created on an upper level freeing up the ground area to become the choir vestry. The small spire was replaced by the very tall spire now sited above the tower section.

The incumbent at the time, The Revd. Gilbert Wall Heathcote very generously gave from his own resources to pay for this major work. The old chancel was curtained off and used as storage space until the altar was set up in 1913 and is now regularly used as Lady Chapel.

The churchyard is approximately 1 acre in size, bounded on the south by a brick wall and hedging on the other sides. The churchyard is a "closed" churchyard for burials by Act of Parliament dated 22 December 1982. The maintenance of the churchyard has passed to Guildford Borough Council. (The cemetery to the rear of the church is the responsibility of Ash Parish Council)

### The Lady Chapel

#### **The Font:**

Walking into the church through the wooden framed porch (16<sup>th</sup> century) to the south door, you have entered the oldest part of the building. To your right is a 17th century, octagonal, wooden, zinc lined baptismal font with cover. The font is traditionally placed by the entrance door symbolizing the newly baptized entering their new life with God. Immediately above your head is a colourful hatchment, a diamond shaped tablet displaying the coat of arms of William Hammersley who lived at Ash Lodge, a retired gentleman from Stoke on Trent. He was born William Spode (of the pottery family) but for whatever reason changed his name to William Hammersley.

#### **Stained Glass Windows:**

To your right and passing down Lady Chapel aisle are two stained glass windows, the first, - Simon and Our Lord's baptism and the next window, given in memory of Helena Wheldon - St Mary Magdalen. Before passing through the oak rood screen, to your left is the "squint" containing the memorial figure of Christ child and children's shrine in memory of A M Lichfold.

Also the banner of the Mothers' Union and the Youth Groups of St Peters. We have now arrived in Lady Chapel chancel; stained glass windows on the south side depict The Parable of the Sower in memory of C.S. and The Good Shepherd and Lux Mundi both in memory of Revd. G. W. Heathcote. Facing towards the east, behind Lady Chapel altar are 3 windows depicting the Presentation, again in memory of Revd. G W Heathcote.

Along the east side is a single window of a saint at prayer. The altar in Lady Chapel is of wood and is Jacobean. To the right of the altar table is a "piscine" a stone bowl used to clean the holy vessels after Mass.

### The Nave -Main Body of the Church

Look to you left. you will be facing the west door which leads to the cemetery and public footpath, the oak porch internally over the west door was built in 1941.

#### **Stained Glass Windows:**

On the north wall are three windows depicting Old Testament scenes - in memory of Henry Chester 1919; the centre window of St Helena, Dorcas and Ruth - in memory of Charlotte Chester 1898 and last of the three scenes from the Old Testament - Samuel - in memory of Frederick James Chester. Inset in the wall just by the pulpit is a 12<sup>th</sup> century stained glass window of an angel.

Into the Sanctuary, again on the north side, a window in memory of QMS Brooke Handley (1883). St Peter. On the south side a Saint bearing a Chalice (1887) presented by Frances Massey. The five windows behind the High Altar typify the Ascension.

### **The Sanctuary:**

The High Altar is of wood and is circa 1864.

### **The Reredos(os).**

Under the 5 stained glass windows behind the High Altar is a very fine mosaic work with marble shafts inlaid in centre of each section.

### **Lectern:**

A very fine brass in the form of an eagle given in memory of Richard Bateman 1914.

### **Memorials:**

A brass memorial plate to Sarah Rosalie Heathcote is placed in the Sanctuary. On the north wall of the nave are memorials to Richard Bateman and to George Manfield. A list of the vicars and rectors of Ash from 1308 is displayed on a wooden tablet situated just before the white stone pulpit.

### **The Organ:**

The organ, a two manual and pedal board - was installed in 1902 and has had several refurbishment works carried out on it. It was refurbished by F H Brown Organ Builder 2008

Before you leave please note on the tower (external) the very fine gilded striking clock

The church building is listed as Grade 2\* and as such we are guided by the Diocese for maintenance and alterations.

The building is stone and bricks and mortar, the real church is the people who worship, pray and live their lives following the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. We hope you have enjoyed your visit.

*The Nave - Main Body of the Church*

Look to you left, you will be facing the west door which leads<sup>to</sup> the cemetery and public footpath, the oak porch Internally over the west door was built in 1941.

Before you leave please note on the tower (external) the very fine gilded striking clock

The church building is listed as Grade 2\* and as such we are guided by the Diocese for maintenance and alterations.

The building is stone and bricks and mortar, the real church is the people who worship, pray and live their lives; following the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
We hope you have enjoyed your visit.

