



ALL SAINTS CHURCH, BINFIELD

Grade II listed

Christianity came to Binfield in the 7th century and Binfield's first church was timber built. In 1350 a new church was needed. As there was no local stone to cut for building it, the masons settled for local materials which consisted of a curious pebbly ironstone conglomerate from the heathlands. They collected it to make a durable outer surface, for the rubble walls. Lime mortar was used for bonding. The re-building at the east end of the church in Victorian times shows facings of knapped (or split) flint. The Tower is puddlestone (or pudding stone, a conglomerate sedimentary rock composed of rounded flint pebbles cemented together by a younger matrix of silica quartz) and was added in 1400, long before the brick-building industry began locally. The ring of 5 bells in the Church date from 1698. A new treble bell was added in 1882. The Clock and its mechanism date back to the mid 1700s.

Entering under the original axe hewn beams of the church and carved chalkstone arch, you are in the nave with its striking timbered roof. This roof is supported on great octagonal stone pillars. There is a flagstone floor. The Font is lead lined and dates from 1100. It is the church's oldest treasure.

With Henry VIII's Reformation in 1530 the stone altar, stained glass windows, murals and statuary would all have been removed, though there is some carefully preserved glass from the Middle Ages, set in the South window. There are also some magnificent Brasses in the floor. One is to a Walter de Anneford dated 1361 and another to a Richard Turner dated 1581. Near the south door is a 1791 monument to Catherine Macauley Grahame who was a historian and ardent republican of her time.

Above the 1628 pulpit there is a sounding board to improve audibility which marks the emphasis given to preaching at this time. Beside it is an ironwork hourglass dated 1636. In Victorian times, All Saints was provided with a north aisle and vestry in 1847 followed by an organ in 1848. In 1859 the architect Benjamin Ferry was commissioned to redesign the church. He had the chancel re-built with a fine barrel roof and the east window glazed to depict Christ in Majesty. The churchyard is described as a place of quiet contemplation. The old graves stand in flower filled grassland. This is left uncut until late July to encourage birds and bees. The current burial ground is at Stubbs Hill.