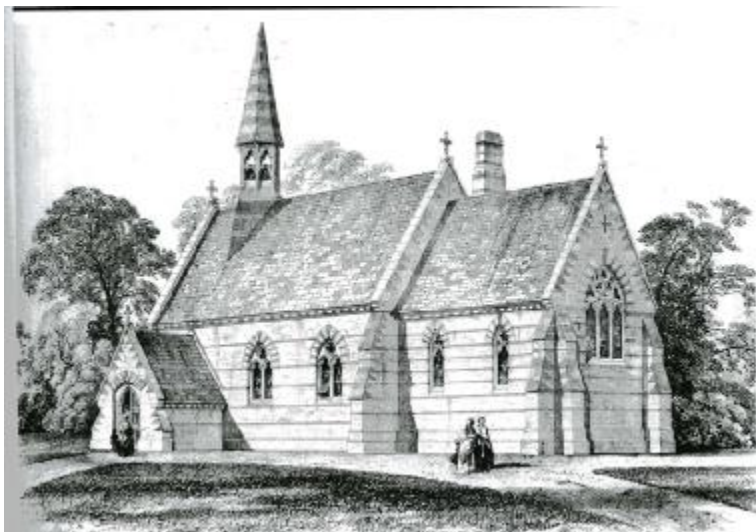


Parish History

For centuries, the parish church of St Andrew's in the market place was the only church in Enfield. The parish stretched for miles to the south, west and east and extended northwards almost to Potter's Bar.



From the beginning of the nineteenth century the rural character of the parish changed as industries started up and the population increased. In the late 1850's the vicar of St Andrew's recognised a need for a church building in Clay Hill and organised the building of a chapel there. The chapel, dedicated to St John the Baptist, was opened in 1858 but was not formally consecrated until 1865. St

John's did not have its own vicar but was a subsidiary church within the parish of St Andrew's.

Then in 1867 St John's was separated from St Andrew's and became the parish church of Clay Hill, with its own vicar, independent of St Andrew's. Lancaster Road formed a boundary between St John's parish and St Andrew's parish.

The first vicar of St John's was the Rev George Viner. He had been the curate at St John's since 1863 but acting on behalf of the vicar of St Andrew's until St John's became a separate parish in 1867. A new vicarage, in Strayfield Road, was built to accommodate the vicar of St John's.

By the 1880's the increase in population in Enfield, accelerated by the coming of the railways and the growth of industrial activity, gave rise to a need for an additional church building within St John's parish. The population growth was concentrated at the southern end of the parish, where land which had previously formed the estates of large, grand houses, was sold off and laid out in building plots for the construction of streets lined with small houses. The vicar of St John's at that time, the Rev James Leith Moody, realised the need for an additional church to serve the needs of the people who lived in the streets immediately to the north of Lancaster Road.



In 1885 a corrugated iron church, which had formerly been a mission church elsewhere, was acquired and land at the junction of Hawthorn Grove and Acacia Avenue was purchased to provide the site on which to erect the church. The church was dedicated to St Luke the Evangelist but was known informally as the Iron Church. The Iron Church opened in December 1885. The Iron Church was not consecrated and was not a separate parish but was an ancillary church within

St John's parish, under the control of the vicar of St John's.

Ten years later, in 1895, the Rev Vincent Macy became vicar of St John's. By then the Iron Church was too small for its growing congregation and was becoming increasingly decrepit. Land at the top of Browning Road was purchased as a suitable site for a new, permanent building for St Luke's, to replace the Iron Church. At the beginning of 1896, as a new year gift to the parish, Mr Macy and his wife at their own expense purchased land at the corner of Hawthorn Grove and Morley Hill, near the Iron Church, on which they built a Church Institute in order to provide a place for meetings and concerts. The Church Institute was also used to relieve the overcrowding at the Iron Church until the new church was built.



James Brooks was engaged as architect to design St Luke's church. The church was deliberately designed to be built in two phases so that the nave could be extended westwards later if and when the congregation increased further.

The foundation stone was laid in October 1898 and the church was dedicated to St Luke the Evangelist and consecrated on 22nd November 1899.



Earlier in 1899, in anticipation of completion of the new church, the parishes of St John's and St Luke's were separated. St Luke's became an independent parish, carved out of the old St John's parish. St Luke's parish took only a tiny proportion of the area of the old St John's parish but a substantial part of the population. Mr Macy, who had until the separation of the parishes been the vicar of the old St John's, became the first vicar of St Luke's. The Rev R J

Brandon became the vicar of the new parish of St John's, hardly reduced in area from the old St John's parish but much reduced in population.

As Mr Macy was no longer vicar of St John's he moved out of St John's vicarage in Strayfield Road and built a large vicarage for St Luke's on land which he had purchased for that purpose on Browning Road. Mr Macy and his wife not only paid for the Church Institute and the vicarage at St Luke's but were also the major contributors to the fund for the building of St Luke's.

By 1904 the anticipated extension to St Luke's was needed. The work was completed early in 1906. Shortly afterwards, Mr Macy retired through ill-health – which may well have been brought on by his ceaseless work and the financial and other worries as vicar of St John's and then of St Luke's.



After 1899 the two parishes of St John's and St Luke's went their separate ways. Each had its own vicar, its own churchwardens and other officers, its own services and its own congregation and each developed its own style of worship and its own way of doing things.

In the early 1980's as both parishes were struggling financially discussions began with a view to reunifying the two parishes. Following the resignation of the previous incumbent, the Rev John Noddings became vicar of St John's in April 1985. The Rev Michael Sherman, who was at that time vicar of St Luke's, retired in 1987. The parishes of St John's and St Luke's, which had been separated in 1899, were reunified nearly a century later in December 1997, when Mr Noddings was inducted as vicar of the parish of St John the Baptist and St Luke the Evangelist, Clay Hill.

Today led by its vicar the parish is a vibrant community that continues to witness to the glory of God in the Clay Hill area.

The information on which this summary is based is taken from the booklet Looking Back: a History of the Church and Parish of St Luke the Evangelist, Enfield by Maire Newton with additional material by Valerie Budd, edited by John Wright. Copies of the booklet are available at £5 per copy. Please email webmaster@clayhillparish.org.uk for details.