

OPEN CHURCH

Thursdays | 2pm to 4pm | April to October
openchurch@stmarysbletchley.org

“Remember ye pore”

St Mary's Church has always had an outward face, helping the poor and needy within the community. As we enter the church there is a fine example of a pre-Civil War poor box dating from 1637.

Local Family Links

Over the years the Rectors of St Mary's Church have been presented by the de Grey/Wilton and Willis families and as we enter the church itself we will find memorials to those families. In church you will also find a memorial to Thomas Spark: the Rector who attended the Hampton Court Conference called by King James I, out of which came the King James Bible (KJB).



Norman archway with Beak-head Voussoir



The original 12th century chapel of “Bicchelai” stood on high ground where the current church of St. Mary's Bletchley still stands. The only surviving part of this Norman chapel is the inner doorway arch which was moved to its current position between 1300 and 1330. The Norman arch has one of the best preserved examples of Beak-head and engraved ornamentation of voussoir resets you will find in the UK. A porch was built to protect the archway in 1330 but sadly, due to rebuilding and restoration over the years, there is little of the original porch left.

Contact Us For More Info

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St Mary's Bletchley

A place of worship since the mid-twelfth century.





The beautiful magnolia sets off the front entrance in springtime

By 1290 the original chancel was replaced by the current structure. Over the next 40 years considerable changes occurred so that by 1330 the floor plan was almost in its final form. The final change to the shape of the building was in 1410 with the erection of the 64 foot (20m) tower which holds eight bells, the latest recast being in 1924.

In 1980 the pews, choir stalls and pulpit were removed and the current stone floor installed.

The de Grey family continues to be remembered through the Lord Grey School a short walk away.

St Mary's was the local church and a focal point for many of those working on breaking secret German codes at Bletchley Park during World War II. They would have found solace and spiritual refreshment at St Mary's Church.

Inside the Church

St Mary's Church of England is a Grade I listed building full of character and history. Here you will find centuries of history, and space and tranquility in a busy world to encounter God's presence. The building has undergone many changes but it remains first and foremost a place of worship. This is a church that engages with the local community and the world, so come in and find out more.

Interior, reredos and East window

The coloured glass windows date from the late 19th century. The Reredos screen found under the Chancel East window dates from the 1950s and was designed by Sir Ninian Comper. The oak panelling either side of the Reredos is a war memorial dating from World War I. The choir screen and the beautiful tower arch are said by some to be the most beautiful features of the church.



Interior looking towards choir screen & tower arch



Reredos and beautiful East Window of Chancel

The tombs and Queen Anne's Coat of arms

Against the south wall of the south aisle lies the cover from the tomb of Sir John de Grey (1266). In the Nave to the Chancel we see the tombs of Richard Grey de Wilton (1441) and Katherine, the wife of Browne Willis (1724). Hanging on the wall above is an early and quite rare example of Queen Anne's coat of arms, which does not include the arms of Scotland which were added to her coat of arms in 1707.



Table tomb to Katherine Willis (1724)



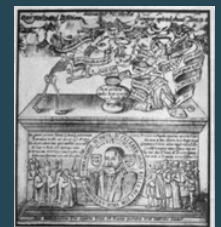
Tomb of Richard Grey de Wilton (1441)

Brass memorial to Dr Sparke, Rector

On the south wall of the chancel can be found the memorial brass to Dr Sparke, Rector of Bletchley in 1603, when he was summoned to the Hampton Court Conference. At this conference the Prayer Book was revised and the Bible translated into English, eventually printed in 1611. The brass plaque commemorates Dr Sparke's involvement at the Conference and his contribution to this process.



Queen Anne's Coat of Arms in Stuart pattern.



Memorial brass to Dr Sparke, Rector Bletchley