

## (Our Lady &) St Patrick's Parish Church and School NOTTINGHAM,

This history of Our Lady and St Patrick's Church and St Patrick's School has been collated from information stored at St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy, and also to a large extent, from detailed information supplied by Nottingham Diocesan Archives.

### Origins

The first steps towards the foundation of this 'Mission' were taken some time in the years 1856-1867 by Canon Mulligan, then Administrator of St Barnabas Cathedral.

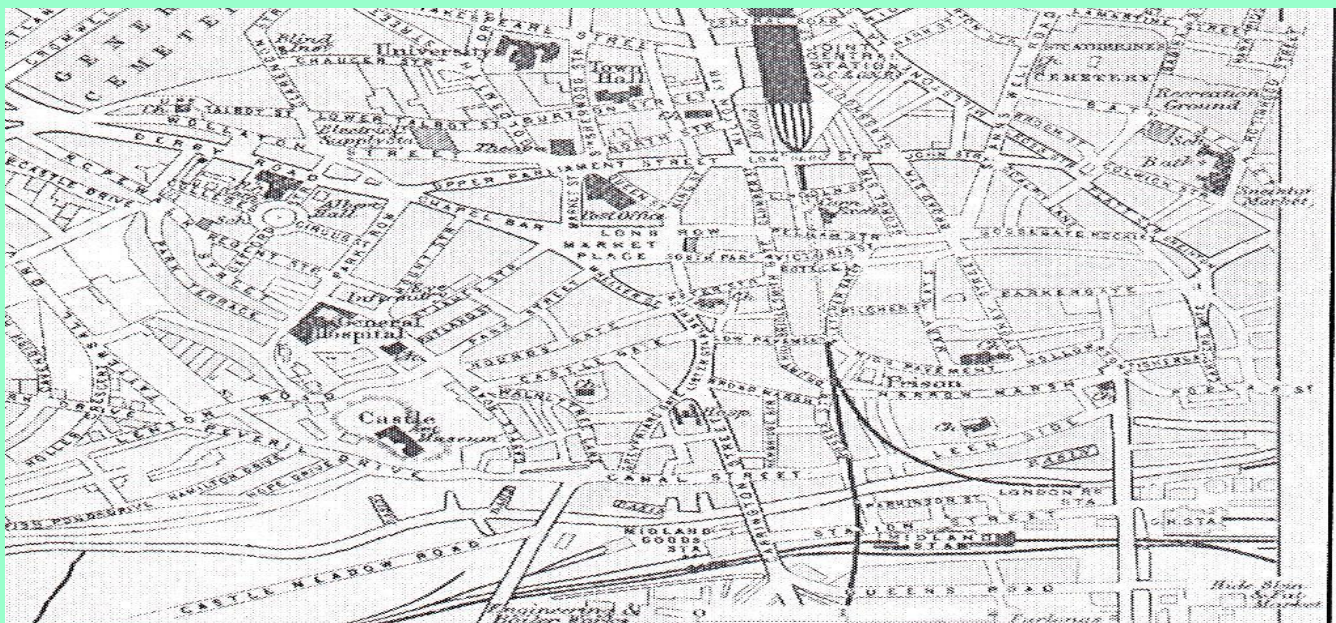
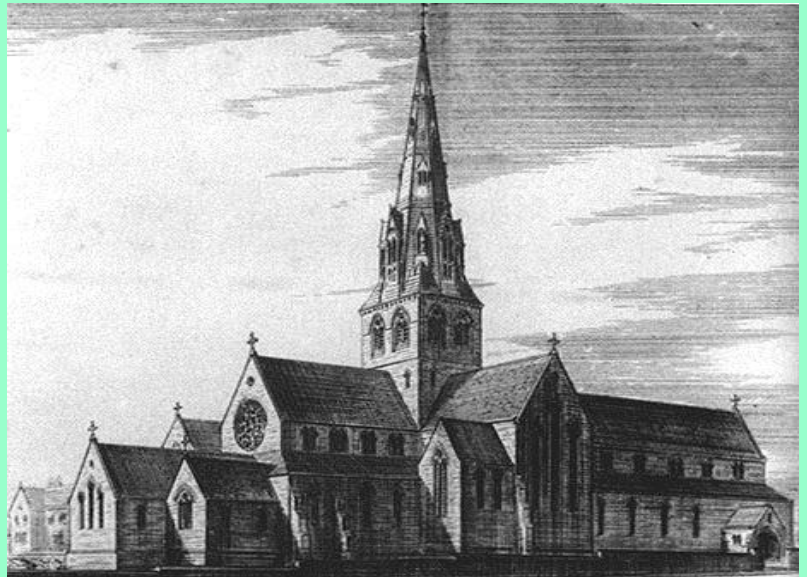
The picture on the right shows a drawing of the St Barnabas Cathedral done by Pugin, between 1841-43.

Canon Mulligan took up the lease of a disused factory on Leenside and turned it into a school. As this lease was due to expire on 1st February 1879, it is possible that it may have been originally taken up at a similar date in 1859; but the exact date of this school cannot be recovered.

From the very outset, it had been Canon Mulligan's intention to establish a mission in this district. St Barnabas Cathedral, Nottingham's only Catholic church up to 1867, was too far away and perhaps 'too respectable' for the many Irish immigrants who, in the direst of poverty, crowded the new streets below the old Lace Market. Father Bond, one of the Canon's curates, was entrusted with the task of preparing for the new mission.

By 1860, when he departed for the West Indian missions, he had managed to collect a considerable sum of money for a church. Mr W. E. Dobson, of the Park, Nottingham, was especially generous. He paid for the maintenance of the school, and contributed notably to the new church of 1883.

The map below is dated 1901 and shows the Leenside/ Narrowmarsh area as it was before the road widening etc of the 1970s, with St Patrick's Church/school clearly shown on the corner of Leenside where it joins London Road.



The little school, adjoining the Turk's Head pub on Leenside, was then reconstructed to serve as a church and presbytery as well as a school. The work cost £400. Bishop Roskell then sent the young Father John Harnett to be the first missionary priest of Our Lady & St Patrick's. This was in 1867. The remaining forty-two years of Provost Harnett's life were to be devoted to this one mission.

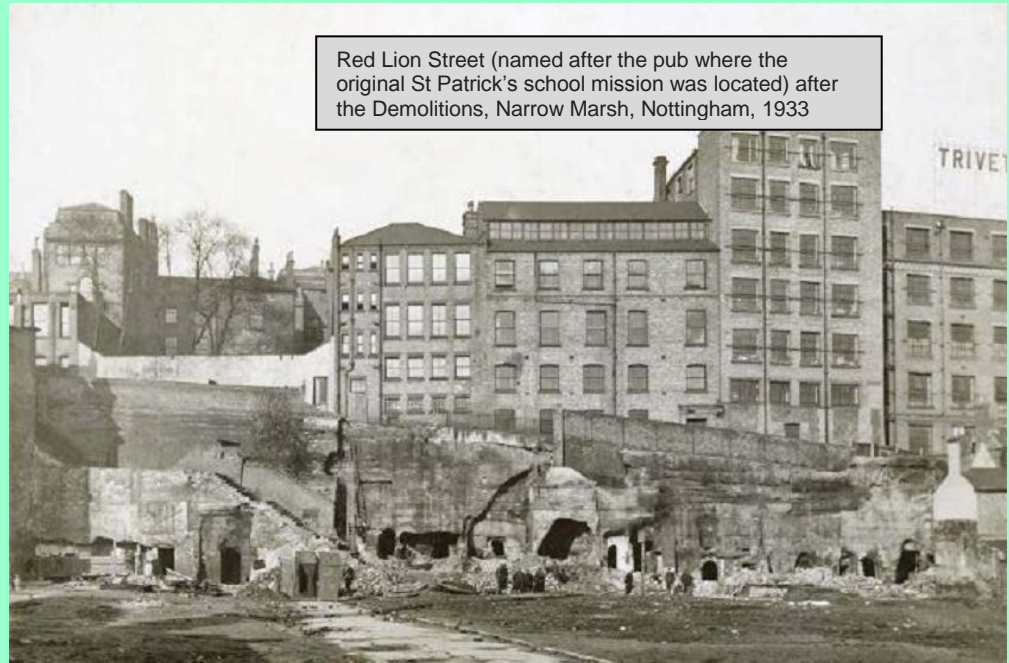
On 18th March 1872, he purchased from the Nottingham Corporation, at a cost of £2,572, the site on London Road. Its 1,184 square yards were bounded also by Narrow Marsh, Leenside and Plumtre Hospitals estate.

Besides four cottages, the site contained the 'Red Lion Inn', and this added a further £226 to the cost as compensation to the tenant when the public-house was demolished.

The thoroughfare called Narrow Marsh, which shared its name with the whole area, was changed at one time to Red Lion Street, after the eponymous public house, 'The Red Lion'.

In the early twentieth century Narrow Marsh was a proper 'rough area' that was notorious for its crime, poverty and slums – It was reported that when patrolling Narrow Marsh, policemen would only venture to it in pairs.

St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church was erected in 1880 at a cost of £6,000 and the reredos contains panel paintings of the Blessed Virgin, St. Patrick, St. Joseph, St. Anthony and St. Winifred.





## School

The first building erected on the site was a school. Its architects, Messrs Evans and Jolly, planned it on lines, which for those days were magnificent. It can be seen below, rising three storeys high, and intended originally to house Boys, Girls, and Infants in three separate departments. The foundation-stone was laid on Easter Monday, 6th April 1874, by Bishop Roskell; it was



opened by Bishop Bagshawe on 18th January 1875; and cost £1,700. The Boys' department on the top floor was condemned about 1929.

A new school for Senior Boys was then built at Sneinton Dale and opened in 1933. It was dedicated to St Bernadette (who had just been canonised that year). The site on Sneinton Dale was bought by a legacy left by Miss Elizabeth Atkin, a cleaner at Boots', who had devoted her whole life to the parish. The school eventually became a Comprehensive School, but sadly closed in the early 1980's.



The remainder of St Patrick's School continued use, but its days were numbered. The Sisters of Mercy from the College Street Convent staffed those schools from 1867 to 1875; the Girls and Infants Departments from 1875 to 1892; and that year until their withdrawal in 1912, the Boys' Girls' Departments.

St Patrick's School continued to provide education for the families of this area of Nottingham until It was closed around 1962/3 as part of a road improvement scheme.



in

from  
and

College Street Convent Nottingham

A new St Patrick's School was built in 1963, on a new site in Wilford Village, on Coronation Avenue.

The presbytery came next. It was designed to hold four priests, and was completed in 1879 at a cost of £1,600. It is recorded that at one time the Sisters of Mercy used the basement of this presbytery to provide 'penny dinners' for the children.

### Church

The first church of Our Lady and St Patrick was an old temporary chapel on Leenside in a converted warehouse. This was closed around 1875. For the next eight years, the school-hall of the Girls' Department was used for Sunday Mass. The erection of the new church was considered a matter of some importance. The new church in London Road, built from designs by Evans and Jolly. Cardinal Manning came to lay the foundation-stone on 21st August 1880.



**Figure 1: The 1880 church (demolished)**

But the builders ran into considerable difficulty. The site lay on what had once been the bed of the River Leen, and was still marshy. They attempted to lay the foundations on the stone piles of what had once been a medieval bridge, carrying the road from London to Nottingham.

These began to sink as soon as the superstructure was raised. The walls cracked. Eventually a sufficient foundation was provided by constructing large brick pillars in

the crypt - which in the original plan was intended for use as a parish hall: the cracks in the walls were patched up, and the completed church opened on 24th September 1883. At some point a purpose built centre was constructed behind the church on the already cramped site.

### Relocation - New School



The remaining schools were closed. A road widening scheme on London Road provided some compensation and a new St Patrick's Primary school was built in the Wilford Village area on Coronation Avenue.

Slum clearance and redevelopment had torn the residential heart out of the old parish. Even the development of the Mass-centre in St Bernadette's School could not make up for the loss of population.

The picture above shows Canon Philip Soar at the entrance to the new school with Miss Ennis, the first Headmistress of the new St Patrick's School in Wilford, and Mr Peter Bartlett, FRIBA of Bartlett and Gray, Nottingham, who was the Architect who designed the new School building).



The picture to the right shows Canon Soar celebrating Mass in the new school hall shortly after the new school was built in 1963. Notice he has his back to the congregation as the Vatican Council had only just met to transform the Mass.



Below - an excerpt from the Educational Times reporting on the revolutionary design of the new St Patrick's School in Wilford. (The original article is on display in the entrance foyer at the current St Patrick's school on Coronation Avenue in Wilford).



### Relocation - New Church

Post-war comprehensive redevelopment in the London Road area led to a loss of the resident population and a decision to close the old St Patrick's Church in 1979. The new church was built in 1981 to serve the new Meadows Housing Area. Proposals for an even more ambitious road scheme sealed the fate of the London road site. Canon Philip Soar took the decision to relocate the church, and a prominent site in the Meadows area was found for a new church. The road scheme was abandoned and the hoped for 'compensation package' did not materialise, so the new building plans had to be carried through on a more modest scale. Much of the work

was done by the Irish Community in the Meadows, with the steel frame of the building done by specialist contractors.

No presbytery was built and a spacious parish hall adjoining the hexagonal church was constructed. The present Church was built in 1981.

In moving the church building so far from its historic site, the decision was taken to change the parish boundaries and the Sneinton area, with the care of Mass-centre at St Bernadette's, was entrusted to the parish of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus on Carlton Hill.



This move and building programme was undertaken by Canon Philip Soar, whose pastorate exceeded that of the forty-two years of the parish founder, Provost Harnett, by almost seven years. He made the economy of not building a presbytery as he qualified for a council housing flat which was situated in the block overlooking the church car-park. Post-war comprehensive redevelopment in the London Road area led to a loss of the resident population and a decision to close that church in 1979. The new church was built in 1981 to serve the new Meadows Housing Area. Plans in the Catholic Building Record (1981, 56) show a large hall and presbytery but in the event only a smaller attached hall was built. The church is hexagonal in plan, with a linked rectangular structure housing a lobby, kitchens, WCs etc. It is of portal steel frame construction clad with brick panels, with recessed full height windows behind exposed steel columns at the corners of the hexagon. The pitched roof is clad in concrete tiles and terminates in a large glazed roof light. The ancillary building is of load bearing brick and also has a concrete tiled roof.

The interior is a single volume, lit from above and at the corners. The internal walls are plastered and the roof clad in stained timber boarding. There are no modern furnishings of note, but there are a number of statues and other furnishings (altar, lecterns, cross, consecration stone outside) brought from the London Road church.

The church lies within the modern residential setting of the Meadows housing estate, not far from

the city centre.

Upon Canon Soar's death in 1993, two houses in Mickledon Close were purchased and used as a presbytery during the time Father George Woodall was parish priest. When Father Woodall was appointed to the neighbouring parish of Corpus Christi, Clifton, the pastoral care of the Our Lady & St Patrick's was given to the Cathedral from 2003-2014. In the September of that year, following the plans laid down by the consultation 'You are Living Stones' established by Bishop McMahon OP, the pastoral care of Our Lady and St Patrick's Church was given to Fr Philip O'Brien, the parish priest of Corpus Christi, Clifton.

#### **Priests of the Mission of Our Lady and St Patrick's Church**

1867-1909	Harnett, Monsignor Provost J. (obit 20th February 1909)
1909-1912	Quilter, P. J.
1912-1914	Ozanne, A.
1914-1918	Tonge, W.
1918-1919	Power, J. P.
1919-1925	Griffin, M.
1925-1929	Bostock, C. E.
1929-1936	Bermingham, L. F.
1936-1944	Atkinson, Monsignor Canon H. E.
1944-1993	Soar, Canon P. (obit 18th June 1993)
1993-2002	Woodall, Canon G.
2002-2014	Served from Cathedral Clergy
2014-	McBrien, P. T. A. (Serves Our Lady and St Patrick's Church and Corpus Christi Clifton Church in Clifton.