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All welcome in Epsom’s parish church

22 September 2023



St Martin’s is the Parish Church of **Epsom**. It is rather hidden from the bustle of the town between Church Road and Church Street where the main entrance is opposite the **Olde King’s Head**. Paths lead from Church Road and Grove Road through the churchyard. It well repays the effort of finding it, an oasis of peace just minutes away from the town centre.

The present building is not the one mentioned in the Doomsday Book, but its north west tower is the oldest building standing in Epsom. It is not easy to appreciate that, as it was disguised after the rebuilding with cladding to match the rest of the new church. The mediaeval church was demolished in 1824 as being too small as well as needing major repair. The only other remnant of it is the 14th century font.

Enlargement was necessary again in 1907 and an intended complete replacement was begun at the east end. It stopped there due to lack of funds! The place were the two parts join still shows the original intention. Inside the two parts are married well and now we have a large airy building, light because of the clear windows in the body of the church where the acoustics are well suited to its musical tradition. It is the venue for performances of many choirs as well as our own. In the rebuilt East end are some marvellous stained glass windows as well as the 1892 window by F.E.Oldaker a former pupil at Epsom College. Once the east window it is now behind the minstrel’s gallery. In the east end and in the nave are monuments as fine as any in Westminster and by the same sculptors. There is a fine organ by Norman and Beard in 1909 which has since been rebuilt by Corbett and Balby, an Epsom firm, in 1966-67, and Principal Pipe Organs of York in 1998.

Overall St Martin’s is a traditional English Parish church and the pattern of worship is recognisably Church of England. The Prayer Book services of Morning and Evening Prayer are sung once every month and the Holy Communion services on other Sundays are also enriched by our choir who often sing in cathedrals in the south-east when their choirs are away. There is time for fellowship around the coffee bar at the west end of the church after services. We strive to be welcoming and inclusive and are one of the few churches which has passed a resolution calling on the Church of England to amend its law so as to allow same sex weddings to happen in church.

The church is open for exploration and private prayer every morning and on Sunday afternoons. All are welcome at all times.

Free concerts (retiring collection) are sponsored by our Director of Music and we regularly host performances by the Epsom Choral Society, Ashtead Choral Society and Epsom Chamber Choir.

Howard Bluett, Reader at St Martins

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