



# PRESS RELEASE

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**For immediate release: 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014**

## **Bishop Andrew of Reading launches the 2014 Celebrations at St Paul's, Wokingham with Choral Evensong**

On Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> January, Bishop Andrew Proud of Reading celebrated Choral Evensong with the people of St Paul's Church to launch the church's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in the first of a series of nine Choral Evensong events led by visiting guest preachers.

Bishop Andrew said, "150 years of witness to the resurrection at St Paul's and its rich choral musical heritage continues to inspire Anglican worship today and is a testament to the peace and love of God." He added that he looked forward to St Paul's continuing to build "God's Grapevine" over the next 150 years as the church, now part of a larger parish including Woosehill Community Church and St Nicholas, Emmbrook, works to bring the good news of the gospel to a wider community.

The next Choral Evensong event is on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> February at 6.15pm when St Paul's will welcome back the Revd Roy Burgess, Vicar of Owlsmoor, and formerly Assistant Priest at St Nicholas, Emmbrook, in the Parish of St Paul. For further details, please see the website [www.stpauls-wokingham.org.uk](http://www.stpauls-wokingham.org.uk) or call the Parish Office on 0118 979 2122.

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## Notes to Editors:

Please see email attachments for files listed below:

- *19-01-14 Choral Evensong at St Paul's + Bishop of Reading, Rt Revd Andrew Proud, launching 2014 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations. jpg*  
[Photo credit: Peter Wells]
- *19-01-14 Choral Evensong at St Paul's + Bishop of Reading Rt Revd Andrew Proud and Fr Richard Lamey.jpg*  
[Photo credit: Peter Wells]
- *19-01-14 Bishop Andrew preaching at Choral Evensong St Paul's.jpg*  
[Photo credit: Peter Wells]
- *19-01-14 Choral Evensong at St Paul's in the Choir.jpg*  
[Photo credit: Peter Wells]
- *19-01-14 Choral Evensong After Party at St Paul's.jpg*  
[Photo credit: Peter Wells]

## Background

St Paul's Church was built by John Walter III, entirely at his own expense, during 1862-1864. It was consecrated by Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, on 23rd July 1864. Almost all of the basic fabric of the church dates from the middle of Queen Victoria's reign, and is a product of that one period. It was built 'in the Decorated style of the 14th and 15th centuries' by Henry Woodyer. It is a Grade II\* listed building – English Heritage (1951).

The principal dates in the history of the church are:

- **1862** Foundation stone laid by Flora, the second Mrs John Walter III
- **1864** Consecration of the church and churchyard on 23<sup>rd</sup> July by Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford
- **1867** Choir was introduced



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- **1870** Organ moved from north aisle to entry via Chancel – organist sitting with back to the choir
- **1873** South aisle opened on Whitsun with new pitched roof
- **1874** North aisle opened 24<sup>th</sup> January increasing capacity seating to 528. Works carried out by Woodyer. Service of Dedication led by Rt Rev John Fielder Mackarness, Bishop of Oxford (1870-1889)
- **1892** The vestry enlarged to its present size. Decorations unveiled on the chancel arch and west wall and new Vestry dedicated on 24<sup>th</sup> January by the Bishop of Reading, the Rt Rev James Leslie Randall
- **1906** Carving round the Aumbry dates from this time
- **1938** The original Walter family pew converted to the present Walter Chapel
- **1950** The Lady Chapel established in the north aisle, a memorial to Revd Henry Major Walter (1850-1931), son of John Walter III
- **1951** The Church awarded Grade II\* listed building status (English Heritage) and the churchyard extension was consecrated
- **1964** Redecoration of the Church for 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations. The highly decorated East Wall, with its *Commandments* and the *Lord's Prayer* were obliterated. The Walter Chapel was completely refurbished as a small area for informal prayer and week day offices
- **1987** Spire damaged by hurricane and non-ferrous bars installed to replace the rusted iron originals. The vertical joints in the stonework were re-pointed at the same time. The Weather-vane was re-gilded and the lightning conductor was renewed and bonded to the bell frame. The Lych Gate was awarded Grade II listing by English Heritage
- **1991** North aisle was re-roofed with *Sarnafil* membrane (the original lead having been stolen and subsequent *Nuralite* covering having deteriorated)
- **1994** The Aumbry Safe was stolen and the original wooden doors were damaged beyond repair. This was replaced with a purpose-built safe and the steel doors were covered with brass doors decorated with chalice and host motif across both doors.
- **1996** Original Willis Organ is replaced. Disused organ case removed to North Transept. Lady Chapel re-sited in the South aisle.
- **1997** - South aisle and Vestry re-roofed with Sarnafil



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- **2002** - The Chancel and Sanctuary were re-decorated
- **2004** - The church Spire was struck with lightning. The tower and bells were destroyed by the subsequent fire. Restoration began a year later and was completed in January 2006. Funds were raised to repair the upper pinnacles during the restoration of the stonework and install a more comprehensive lightning protection system.
- **2006** The Rt Rev Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford led a Service of Re-dedication following the restoration of the Tower and Bells.

To find out what's on at St Paul's go to [www.stpauls-wokingham.org.uk](http://www.stpauls-wokingham.org.uk).

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## **The Parish of Wokingham St Paul**

St Nicholas, Emmbrook † St Paul, Wokingham † Woosehill Community Church