

St. Anne's story

There will be people reading this potted history of St. Anne's church and parish who will be able to recall many things unknown to us current parishioners. We would love to hear from you because the rich history of our parish deserves a much fuller presentation.

During the years before and after the last War it was said that St. Anne's parish had the largest Catholic population of any parish in the country. If so, things have changed dramatically. There has been demolition on a grand scale, many of the large tenement blocks replaced by houses and bungalows, with gardens front and back. Now we have a very large, beautiful church, re-designed twenty years ago to respond to our change of circumstances, with a congregation much smaller than it used to be, but diverse, multi-national, and very happy.

The church was built in 1842 by the monks of Downside Abbey. According to their historian its building almost bankrupted the Abbey. On a date unknown, the care of the parish passed to the monks of Ampleforth Abbey. It stayed with the monks until they handed over the parish to the care of the Archdiocese in 1950.

Five priests served the parish at that time. Now we have half a priest, St. Anne's now being part of the combined parish of St. Anne and St. Bernard.

The church itself is built with beautiful local sandstone. In 1982 it was industrially cleaned at Government expense, the grime and smoke of 120 years giving way to the beautiful original red stone.

We believe our church to be as beautiful as any in the Archdiocese, When our website develops further we will be able to take you on a tour of the special features of our church.