

# 2 St Peter's Church

Walk 2: The Heart of Harrogate Town walk



When in 1860, the Victoria Park Company began to develop the open agricultural land between High and Low Harrogate to provide the town with a new centre, it became obvious that a new church would be needed. This would serve not only the residents, but also the needs of the town's authority.

A gift of land from a local resident provided a site for the new church and an associated school, and in 1868 a subscription was begun for building the church, the architectural commission going to J. H. Hirst of Bristol, who also designed Cambridge and Prospect Crescents.

After the laying of the foundation stone on 21 April 1870, building progressed so well that it was possible to open the chancel and temporary nave on 7 September 1871, the church being consecrated on 3 October 1876, by which time it was clear that Harrogate had received a notable addition to its legacy of sacred architecture.

Further important additions were made in 1885, 1890, 1910, 1921 and 1926 when the great tower was completed to a design by A. A. Gibson which respected Hirst's original concept. The adjoining school was demolished in 1937 to make way for a

Cinema, which itself was demolished in the 1980's.

Internally, St. Peter's contains much of beauty and high craftsmanship. The splendidly broad nave contains stone carving by Pashley whose other work at Lichfield Cathedral is widely admired. The internationally celebrated organ builder Schultze constructed the great organ, but it is perhaps the stained and painted glass that is St. Peter's greatest decorative glory, which is both rich and artistic. Made by the famous London firm of Burlison and Grylls, it embellishes the chancel, transepts, chapel and aisles, and is a glorious sight.

Between 2009 - 2011, a splendid series of modern improvements were introduced to St. Peter's exterior and interior, which greatly enhanced the mission of this great Church at the heart of the Harrogate Community.

