



ST. RAPHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

A PowerPoint Presentation of the architectural,
historical and religious features of this Grade II*
Listed building, the Parish church of Surbiton in the
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark

By John McCarthy and David Kennedy

<https://straphaelsurbiton.org.uk>

St. Raphael's Church

Coloured engraving by W. Radley, c. 1850



St. Raphael's Church

Alexander Raphael (1775-1850), the son of a very wealthy Armenian merchant, formerly of Madras in India, MP for St. Albans and owner of Surbiton Hall, built the church entirely at his expense on his estate. The architect was Charles Parker. The church opened for public worship on 1 September 1850. After Alexander Raphael died the church passed to his nephew Edward Raphael. By 1874, the church had been extensively restored by him. Then, in 1888, it passed to a niece, Agnes Louisa Elizabeth, Countess of Mexborough, née Raphael. The church remained in the possession of the Mexborough family until 1945, when it was sold to what was then the Roman Catholic Diocese (now Archdiocese) of Southwark.

In 2012 a full restoration, including the provision of extensive new community facilities, was completed, gaining a Kingston upon Thames Society's Townscape Award.

St. Raphael's Church as constructed



Parish Archives

St. Raphael's Church, 2011



St. Raphael's Church



About St. Raphael's

St. Raphael's Roman Catholic Church, designed by Charles Parker (1799-1881), is a Victorian Grade II* listed church. To quote Pevsner & Cherry "What should one call this style? It is certainly Italian, and may be anything from Early Christian to Early Renaissance". This unique church is built of warm-coloured Bath stone ashlar, and stands in a prominent position overlooking the Thames on Portsmouth Road, Kingston upon Thames. With its "typically Early-Victorian-Italianate top" to the tower, surmounted by a gilded Cross, its wing-buildings give it an added presence.

Raphael's coat of arms, his own memorial and others to some of his descendants are in the church. He is buried in the vault under the high altar. When it opened in 1850, it became the first post-Reformation Roman Catholic Church in the Kingston area. Later, several members of the exiled French royal family were married here in the presence of the future Edward VII and his wife Alexandra. Raphael's architect, Charles Parker, was considered to be a pioneer and it is considered that the church well deserves its high statutory listing.

St. Raphael's Church, 2011

Photo. taken on behalf of the Kingston upon Thames Society in 2011 when It awarded the renovated Church one of its Townscape Awards.



George Rome Innes

CHI-RHO, Christogram over entrance



A Christogram (*Monogramma Christi* in Latin) is a monogram or combination of letters that forms an abbreviation for the name of **Jesus Christ**, traditionally used as a religious symbol within the Christian Church.



Looking up at Alexander Raphael's Memorial from the Porch



D. O. M.

HIC JACET SPE CERTA MELIORIS VITÆ

ALEXANDER RAPHAEL, ARMIGER,

HUJUSCE NUPER ÆDIS FUNDATOR INSIGNIS:

FORI BRITANNICI SENATOR. AMORE PATRIÆ. JUSTITIÆ, LIBERTATIS
OPTIMUS EMICUIT:

INTER ÆSTUANTES SÆCULI OPINIONES FIDEM INCONCUSSAM TENUIT:

INGENIO EXPOLITISSIMO. LINGUARUM PLURIMARUM PERITIA,
PROFUSA LARGITATE IN EGENOS. SPECTATA PROBITATE IN OMNES,

HAUD EXIGUAM SIBI FAMAM CONCILIAVIT:

AMPLISSIMAM PECUNIAM AD JUVENTUTEM

PAUPERIOREM INSTITUENDAM, NEC NON

RELIGIONEM CATHOLICAM ILLUSTRANDAM. NON IN ANGLIA MODÒ,

SED ETIAM IN ITALIA AC GERMANIA VIVUS CONTINUÒ EROGAVIT:

OB MULTAM ITA VIRTUTEM, EQUITIS AURATI

S.SYLVESTRI ORDINIS TITULO ET HONORE A SUMMO PONTIFICE PIO IX ORNATUS,

OBIIT DIE XVII. NOVEMBRIS A.D. MDCCCL. ÆTAT LXXV.

HOC MONUMENTUM, PIETATIS ESSE ARBITRATI,

FRATER. SOROR. ET NEPOTES MÆRENTES POSUÈRE.

R. I. P.

Translation of the inscription on Alexander Raphael's Memorial Tablet

To God, most good, most great

Herein rests Alexander Raphael, who in certain hope of a better life, not long since was the noble and distinguished founder of this Church. He was a member of the British Parliament and lover of country, justice and freedom, who held an unshakeable faith. He was a skilled linguist renowned for his generous financial assistance for the education of poor young people and in the promotion of the Catholic Faith, not only in England but also in Italy and Germany, which he continued to fund while he lived.

He was renowned for his many virtues for which he was honoured by the Order of St. Sylvester being conferred upon him by the Supreme Pontiff Pope Pius IX.

He died on the 17th day of November in A.D. 1850 aged 75.
This memorial monument has been erected by a dutiful brother and sister and his like-minded grieving nephews and nieces.

May he rest in peace

Tablets either side of the internal door



Tablets by the inner door

The tablet on the left hand side of the door as you face it reminds us that “My house shall be called the House of Prayer.” The tablet on the right hand side lists chaplains and parish priests since 1850.

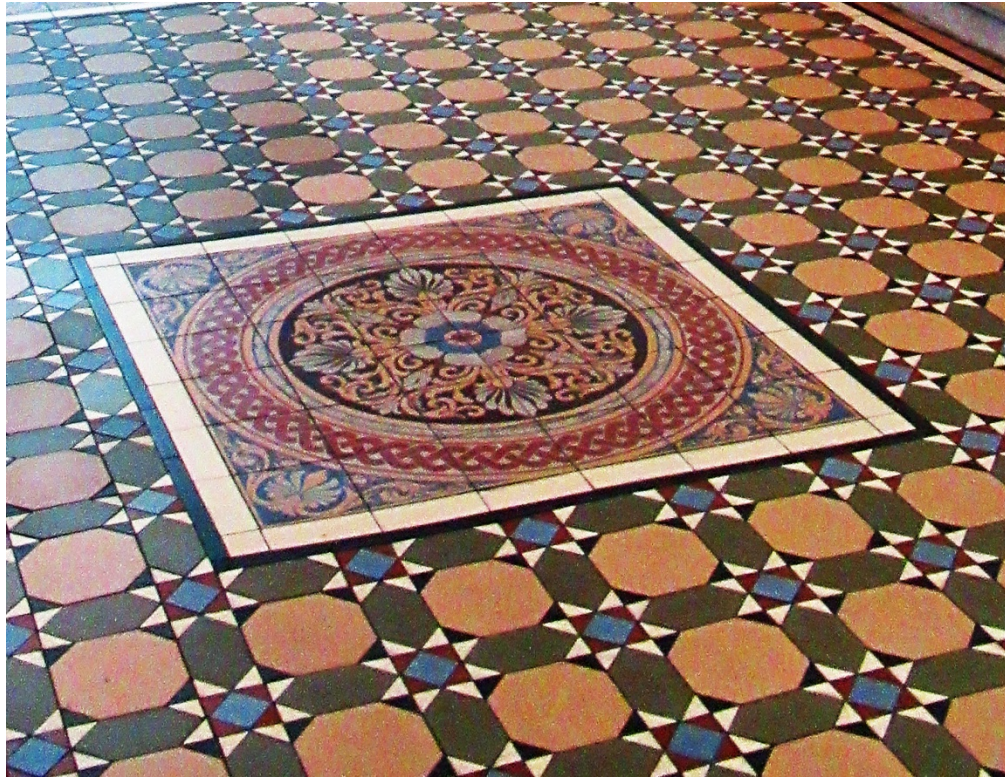
Until 1945, when it was sold to the Diocese of Southwark, the incumbents of St. Raphael’s technically were chaplains of a private church, although they ministered very much like a parish priest. Frs. Henry Clark and James Doyle served as army chaplains during the Crimean War. In 2017 Fr. Michael Lovell was appointed parish priest.

Interior facing East looking at High Altar



David Illiff

Floor Tiles



These were laid as part of the restoration. Note the seven rose-patterned tiles reminding us of the seven sacraments, i.e., baptism, confirmation, holy eucharist, penance, anointing of the sick, holy orders and matrimony.

The North Aisle, facing East, looking at the Statue of St. Anthony of Padua



Memorial to Anne, Princess Löwenstein

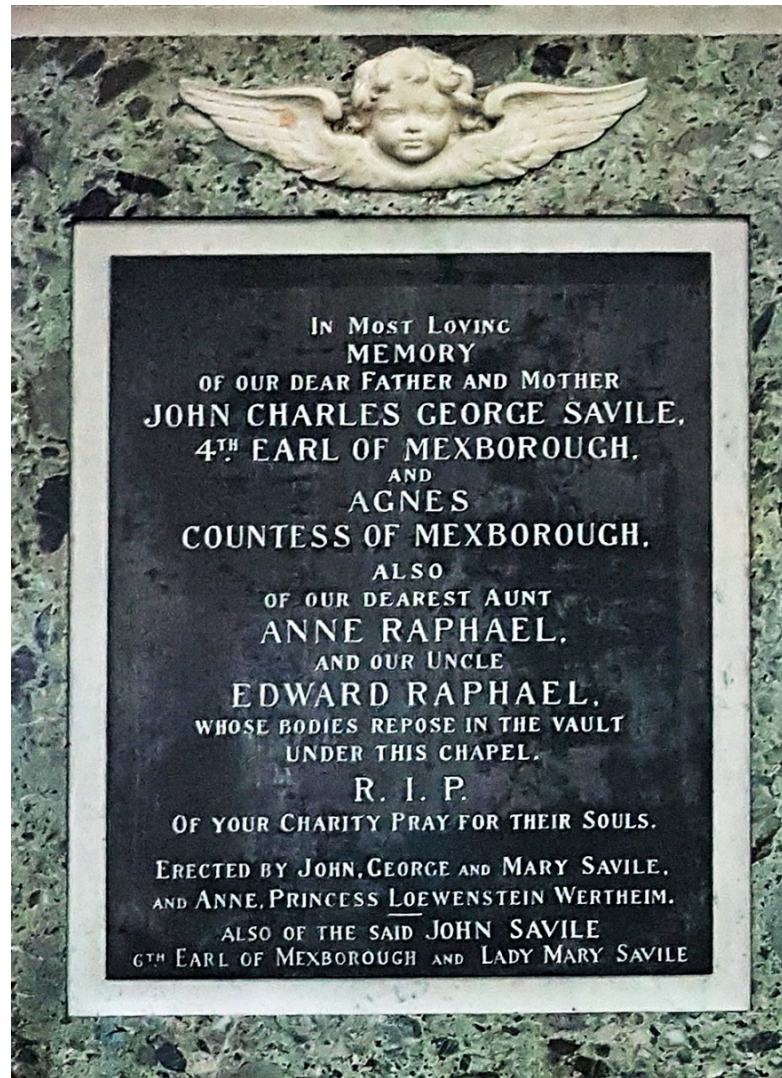


Memorial to Anne, Princess Löwenstein

Princess Anne of Löwenstein-Wertheim-Freudenberg, who was a daughter of John Savile, 4th Earl of Mexborough and Agnes Louisa Elizabeth Raphael, became a Princess when she married Prince Ludwig of Löwenstein-Wertheim-Freudenberg in 1897 (he died within a year). She was an English socialite who was an aviation patron and enthusiast.

Anne was the second woman both to attempt and to perish in a transatlantic aircraft flight when on the 2 September 1927 the Fokker F.VII monoplane powered by a 450 hp Bristol Jupiter engine, known as the *Saint Raphael*, was lost somewhere between Labrador and Newfoundland. Anne and her pilots, Captain Hamilton and Colonel Minchen, all perished without trace. *St. Raphael Lake* in Ontario, Canada, is named after the *Saint Raphael* aircraft.

Mexborough & Raphael Memorial



Mexborough & Raphael Memorial

This memorial was erected by The Hon. John Savile (1869-1945), The Hon. George Savile (1871-1937), Lady Mary Savile (1863-1945) and Princess Anne Löwenstein Wertheim, née Savile (1865-1927), children of the 4th Earl of Mexborough (1810-1899) and Agnes, Countess of Mexborough (1831-1898). After the death, in Italy, of the John Horatio Savile, 5th Earl of Mexborough (1899-1916), John Savile became the 6th Earl of Mexborough. After his death and that of Lady Mary Savile both names were inscribed on the memorial.

Baptismal Font



The baptismal font is made of white Sicilian marble and has a wooden cover. Behind is the Paschal Candle or Easter Candle which is a new candle that is blessed and lit every year in the Church at the Easter Vigil.

Statues of St. Peter (left), The Sacred Heart of Jesus (centre) and St. Paul (right)



Statue of St. Anthony of Padua holding the Christ child



The Pulpit

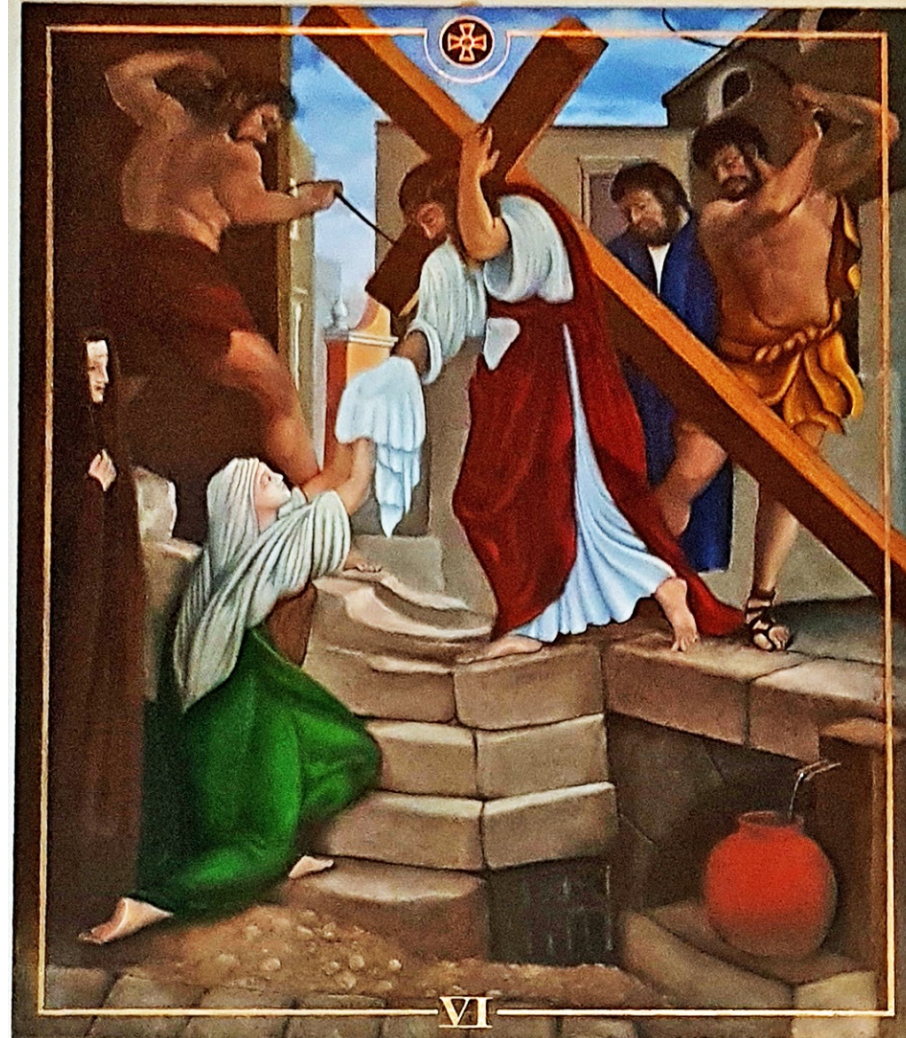


The Pulpit

The Pulpit, also known as “The Ambo”, is made of finely carved white Sicilian marble. Note the Christogram emblem on the lectern cloth and the IHS symbol below the cross.

Stations of the Cross

Station VI. Veronica & Jesus



The Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross, or the Way of the Cross, also known as the Way of Sorrows or the *Via Crucis*, refers to a series of 14 images depicting Jesus Christ on the day of his crucifixion with accompanying prayers. The stations grew out of imitations of *Via Dolorosa* in Jerusalem which is believed to be the actual path Jesus walked to Mount Calvary. The object is to help the faithful to make a spiritual pilgrimage through contemplation of the Passion of Christ. The images are arranged in numbered order and the faithful travel from image to image, stopping at each station to say the selected prayers and reflections. This can be done individually or in a procession most commonly during Lent, especially on Good Friday, in a spirit of reparation for the sufferings and insults that Jesus endured during his Passion.

High Altar with Tabernacle



The High Altar

The High Altar with its gilded Tabernacle holding the Blessed Sacrament is made of white Sicilian marble. It was installed as part of the original construction.

In 2002 the General Instruction of the Roman Missal said “The altar should be built separate from the wall, in such a way that it is possible to walk around it easily and that Mass can be celebrated at it facing the people, which is desirable wherever possible.”

In practice, after the Second Vatican Council, altars that obliged the priest to have his back to the people were generally moved away from the wall or reredos, or, where this was unsuitable, such as here in St. Raphael's, a new free-standing altar was built closer to the people.

Stained glass window above High Altar



The Stained Glass Window

The window, installed soon after the church was built, is believed to be either Italian or French, but sadly nothing is known of its maker. Experts say it is quite unique and know of no other similar one in this country. The stained glass window, centre panel, illustrates the story of Tobit and the Archangel Raphael from the Roman Catholic Old Testament. It is an allusion to the healing power of the Archangel.

On the left is Jesus Christ. On the right is the Blessed Virgin Mary. Alexander Raphael's coat of arms is under The Archangel (more about this later).

Organ loft above the entrance



David Illiff

The Old Organ

The National Pipe Organ Register [NPOR, V2. 19.1] shows that the organ in the choir loft was surveyed in 2005, was built by Bishop & Starr in 1848 and was installed elsewhere before being moved to St. Raphael's in 1850. Alexander Raphael's coat of arms can be seen above the case. Sadly, the old organ has deteriorated, has not been used for some time and is considered to be past economical repair. Today, a fine modern electronic organ is used, the console being positioned in the southern aisle near the War Memorial.

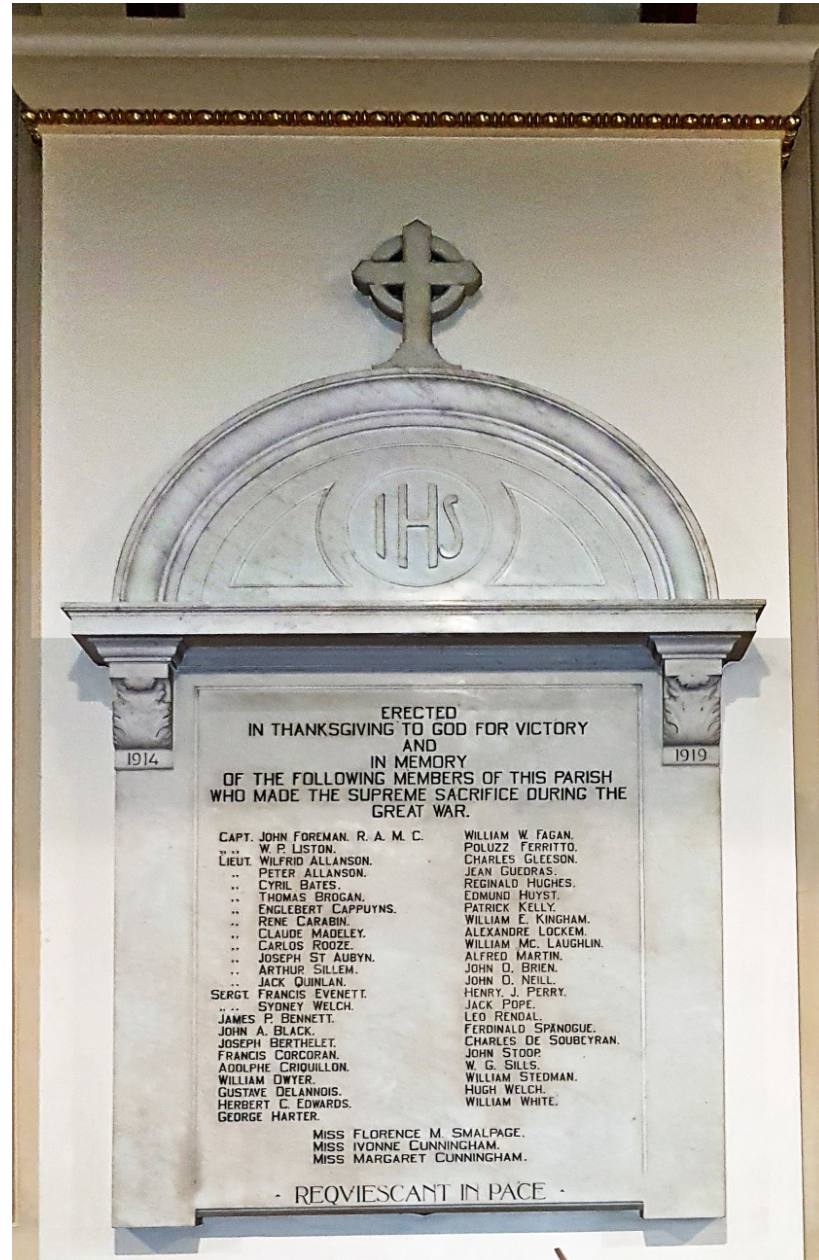
Alexander Raphael's Coat of Arms



Alexander Raphael's Coat of Arms

A shield is divided into four quarters upon which is superimposed a cross. Above this is a crown upon which is a double-headed eagle. A cross is superimposed on the eagle. Under the shield is a motto "*In Hoc Vinces*", i.e., "*In this, conquer*". The crosses symbolise the Christian faith which make all projected conquests possible. Moving from left to right and then up and down, the first quarter of the shield depicts the sun in splendour. In the second, Mount Ararat is depicted and on the summit is Noah's Ark. Under Mount Ararat is an Armenian word that transliterates to "*Naksivan*", i.e., "*The place where the ark rested*" after the Flood, according to the Book of Genesis, and therefore the first city on earth. The third quarter depicts the story of Tobit and the Archangel Raphael from the Book of Tobit. The fourth quarter depicts an anchor with its cable entwined around its shaft.

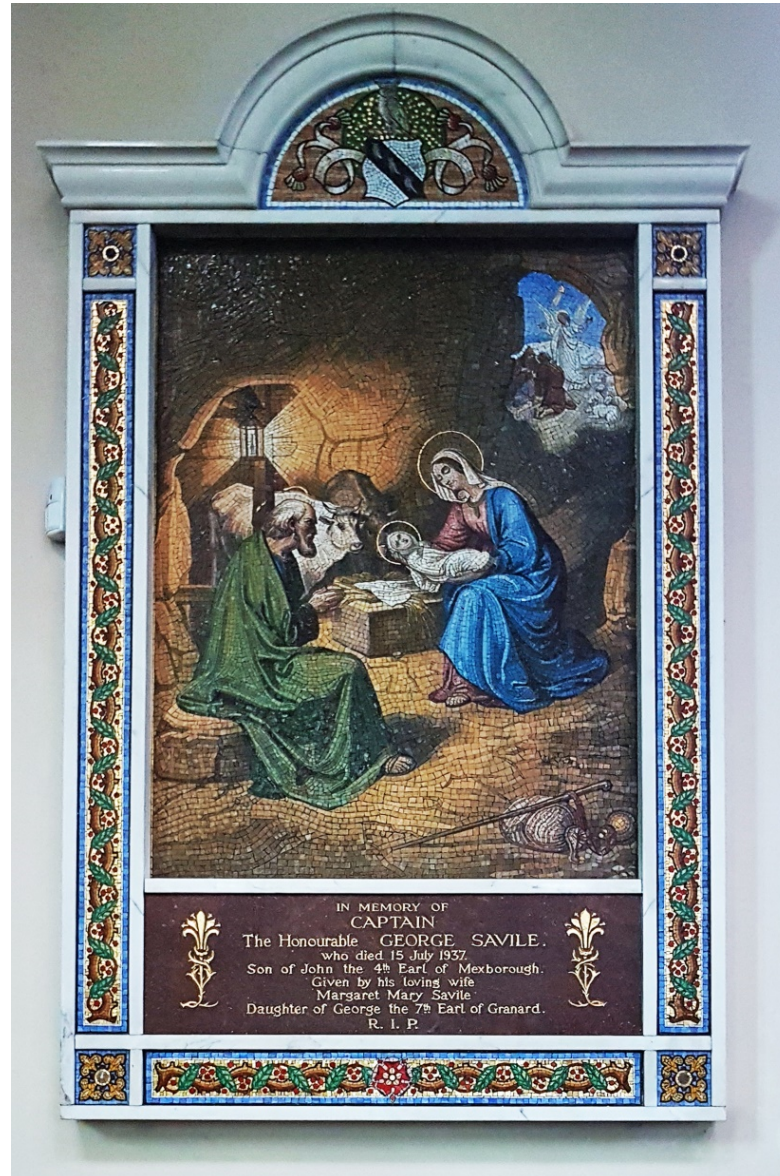
Memorial to the Parish dead of The Great War, 1914-1919



The War Memorial

This lists the names of 47 men and three women. Most of the men served in the British forces whilst thirteen were Belgian citizens, probably known to Belgian refugees. Miss Florence Smalpage was killed during a German air raid on London, in 1917, by shrapnel from an anti-aircraft gun. The Cunningham sisters were killed in the church of St. Gervais & St. Protais during a German long-range bombardment of Paris in 1918. William Fagan died in 1910 and Reginald Hughes' name mistakenly was inserted instead of the name of his brother, Owen Hughes. Francis Evenett, stationed in England, was murdered by a comrade of unsound mind.

Memorial to Captain, Hon. George Savile



Captain, The Hon. George Savile

He was the youngest son of the 4th Earl of Mexborough and owned the Church from 1898 until he died in 1937. He lived at Ditton Lodge, Thames Ditton, Surrey, and Hawnby Lodge, Helmsley, Yorks. He was educated at Eton and Trinity College Cambridge and for a short time he was a Lieutenant in the Green Howards before he resigned his commission to manage his inherited estates. He had a great knowledge of horses and was a recognised enthusiast of four-in-hand coach driving, being a President of the Coaching Club. He was a noted shot and follower of hounds. When in his forties, he served with the rank of Captain in the Great War, first in France in the Army Remount Service, then in Italy in military intelligence. His memorial, was installed by his wife, Lady Margaret Mary Savile, who was the daughter of the 7th Earl of Granard. He was one of the Founders of Westminster Cathedral and donated the block of granite from which the High Altar was made. It is believed that he funded the war memorial in St. Raphael's Church. He was once President of Thames Ditton Memorial Hospital.

Our Lady's Altar



Our Lady's Altar, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, is made of finely-carved white Sicilian marble. The statues above are of St. Joseph (left), the Blessed Virgin Mary (centre) and St. John The Evangelist (right), all by Mayer of Munich.

Statues above Our Lady's Altar



St. Joseph

Bl. Virgin Mary

St. John the Evangelist

Tribune



This was originally a private area for Alexander Raphael and other owners of the church when they attended Mass and other Services. Note the fireplace: at one time probably the only part of the church that was heated.

The Crypt



Step down



Alexander Raphael's coffin

The Crypt

The left-hand picture was taken from the entrance door which is on the exterior rear wall of the church. It shows the steps down to the Crypt where it lies under the High Altar. In the foreground is the most recent coffin, that of the Rev. Canon Bernard Grady, Parish Priest of St. Raphael's, 1956-1986. Alexander Raphael's coffin is behind it.

The right hand picture is a close-up of Alexander's coffin with his coat of arms on the wall behind. Members of the Mexborough family, former owners of the Church, also are buried in the Crypt.

Rear (eastern) elevation of St Raphael's



George Rome Innes

Rear (eastern) elevation of St. Raphael's

The photograph shows, from left to right:-

- the hall in Alexander House with its French windows opening out onto the private lawn,
- the eastern end of the Church with its great window over the High Altar with, below it, the entrance down into the Crypt,
- the window of the Sacristy (vestry),
- the Parish Offices housed in the original priest's accommodation which was replaced by a new building set at right angles across the northern side to the lawn.

Alexander House & Hall



ALEXANDER HOUSE

Alexander House was commissioned by Alexander Raphael (1775-1836) as a school for deprived children.

Alexander, a devout Catholic, held high office both locally and nationally:

Balliff of Kingston's Court of Assembly (1831), Coroner (1832),

first Catholic Sheriff of London (1834-1835)

since the Protestant Reformation, and M.P. for St Albans (1847-1850)

The Order of Pope St. Sylvester was conferred on the 28th June 1850

The original construction, known simply as the 'Small Hall', was named Alexander House on

2 November 2003, the Solemnity of All Saints. The expanded Alexander House, now linked by the cloister to the Church, was built in 2010

and blessed on 31 October 2010, the Solemnity of All Saints, by The Most Rev. Peter Smith, L.L.B., J.C.D., Archbishop of Southwark.

It was formally opened on 27 May 2011 by

Rt. Rev. Paul Hendricks, M.A., Ph.L., V.G., auxiliary bishop of Southwark

The feast of St. Augustine of Canterbury, bishop and apostle of England.

A.M.D.G.

Alexander House - the Hall



George Rome Innes

Alexander House & Hall

This is a community facility incorporating both the original Listed southern wing and a new building behind. It includes on the ground floor a new hall served by a fully-equipped kitchen, the Parish Library/meeting room and toilets while upstairs are two other meeting rooms. There is disabled access throughout. The Library was originally a school room with no ceiling as such, merely the inside of the roof. This left enough space to allow for a meeting room to be inserted on the first floor above the Library as part of the new work. The Hall is used as an overspill area for the congregation attending Mass and is available for hire upon application to the Parish Office.

Library, originally a school room



Marriage of Princess Hélène to the Duc d'Aosta, St Raphael's Church, 1895



Exiled French Royalty & St. Raphael's

The exiled French royal family lived at Claremont House, Esher, and many members worshipped at St Raphael's. The Duc d'Alençon was confirmed here in 1856. In 1863, the Duc de Chartres married Princess Françoise d'Orléans in the Church. In 1864, Louis Philippe Albert, Comte de Paris, married the Infanta Marie Isabelle of Spain here and the French dowager Queen was a guest. In 1889, the French royal couple celebrated their silver wedding at St. Raphael's. In 1895, Princess Hélène d'Orléans married the Duc d'Aosta, heir to the King of Savoy, in the Church. The Prince and Princess of Wales attended, among other European royalty. In 1899, Jean Pierre Clément Marie, Duc de Guise, married Isabelle Marie Laure d'Orléans at St. Raphael's Church.

With thanks to

Rev. Fr. Michael Lovell

Michael Pearce, Parish Manager

Sandra Coombes

Unless otherwise stated, photographs were taken by the authors and edited by John McCarthy.

Research was carried out by David Kennedy.

www.kingstonhistoryresearch.co.uk

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