

Brief History of Holy Trinity

The present Holy Trinity Church is the third building to serve the community of Longlevens. Originally a mission from Barnwood Church, the first structure was a stone-built hall in what is now The Avenue which opened in 1873. This was replaced in 1898 by a larger prefabricated building on Church Road, for many years known as “the Tin Tabernacle”. By the late 1920s Longlevens was developing as a suburb of the City of Gloucester and, with a growing population and distinct community identity, a new parish was created in 1934, to be known as “Wotton St. Mary Without.” “Wotton St Mary” reflects the historical and geographical links with the Wotton area of Gloucester and the parish of St Mary de Lode to which the area belonged, “Without” meaning that it was outside the City boundary at that time.

The new Holy Trinity Church was designed by local architect Major Howard Stratton-Davies and constructed between early 1933 and March 1934, where possible using local materials. The site for the new building was purchased following the relocation of Anderson’s Garage to the newly realigned Cheltenham Road, the site still occupied today by the BP filling station. The building was consecrated on Easter Eve 1934 by Right Reverend Arthur Headlam, with Holy Communion being celebrated there for the first time on the following day. The Tin Tabernacle remained in use as the Church Hall.

Holy Trinity’s first major challenge was to minister to the local population and even German Prisoners of War throughout the Second World War, eventually commemorating those who fell in the conflict with a permanent memorial in the building. It has remained in the care of successive generations ever since.

In 1984 a new Church Hall was built in the Church grounds, and 50 years after it ceased to function as the church building, the Tin Tabernacle was finally sold and demolished to make way for the doctors’ surgery which now stands on the site. Today plans are progressing to maintain and enhance the Church and its environment, with a new ramp to the main entrance being completed in 2012, and a new energy efficient lighting system being installed in 2014.

Reflecting a growing interest in the work of Howard Stratton-Davies, and the preservation of the 1930s character of the building, Holy Trinity Church was given Grade 2 Listed status in 2014.

(Based on Longlevens Parish and Place published in 1996 by Evelyn Christmas)