A photograph of St Andrew's Garrison Church, a large brick building with a prominent arched entrance. A large, leafless tree stands to the left of the entrance. A group of people is gathered on the lawn in front of the church. A white statue of a figure with arms raised stands to the right of the entrance. The foreground shows a paved road with some fallen leaves.

# St Andrew's Garrison Church: a Guide

# ST ANDREW'S GARRISON CHURCH: A GUIDE

The predecessor to the current St Andrew's Garrison Church was built in 1856. It was built of corrugated iron and became known as the "Iron Church".

In 1908, the Iron Church was named after St Andrew.

Following the First World War, money was raised throughout the UK for a new Church of Scotland and presbyterian church at Aldershot, the home of the British Army. And in 1927, the current brick built St Andrew's was opened; the Iron Church having been demolished the previous year.

Due to lack of money, the 1927 building had been built with a shorter nave than originally planned. Money was later raised during the 1930s to extend the church nave and St Andrew's was formally reopened and rededicated in the presence of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February 1939.

A new church hall, and related rooms were added in the 1950s. The hall was completed in 1959 and dedicated as a memorial to "*all members of the Church of Scotland and kindred presbyterian churches who gave their lives*" in the Second World War.

Further information about the history of St Andrew's can be found on the church website [www.standrewsaldershot.co.uk](http://www.standrewsaldershot.co.uk). There is also a separate booklet on the stained glass windows in the church.

We hope you enjoy looking around the church.

# THE PORCH

Outside the church, next to the porch there is a large white statue of St Andrew. This statue had belonged to the Royal Caledonian School, Bushey, Hertfordshire. Following the closure of that school in the 1990s, the statue was donated to the church.



The walls of the porch display a number of old photographs of St Andrew's as well as two panels which list former ministers of the church.



Shown above is the dedication plaque of St Andrew's which states that: *"This church was built to the glory of God in thankful remembrance of the soldiers of the Church of Scotland and kindred churches throughout the Empire who laid down their lives in the Great War 1914-1918"*

The two war memorials shown below were originally from Aldershot Presbyterian Church. Also shown is a piece of sculpture, designed by the artist Pilkington Jackson, on the inside wall of the porch showing a pelican with her young - a traditional symbol of sacrifice.





# THE NAVE, CHANCEL AND APSE



The nave of the church was extended in the late 1930s, so as to provide greater space for Army ceremonial and remembrance services. It now has seating for more than four hundred. On Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February 1939, St Andrew's was formally reopened and rededicated in the presence of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.

The main lectern, which has a large brass eagle design, was paid for by past and present members of the Army Physical Training Corps. It was originally gifted to St George's Garrison Church, but in 1983 was transferred to St Andrew's. The main bible, on it, was given to St Andrew's, by the Royal Corps of Transport, on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1989, to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the rededication of the church.



There is also a smaller oak lectern on the communion table, gifted in June 2011, in memory of John McBryer and Ian Youngson.





Some of the pieces of church furniture, such as the main communion table and the seating surrounding it in the Apse, were specifically designed for St Andrew's.

Other pieces have been gifted to the church. The Celtic cross (shown right) was presented by the congregation to the church to mark the Millennium.

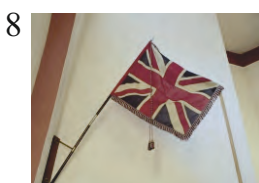


The prayer stall, next to the lectern, was donated to the church in March 1911, by the widow of the Rev George Kirkwood, in memory of her husband, who prior to his death had been the Senior Chaplain to the Forces.

The large wooden memorial, shown right, is to Field Marshall Earl Wavell. It was transferred to St Andrew's in 1967.

There are memorials to Lt Col Burnett and Brigadier-General Campbell both of whom were elders of the church. There is also a distinctive brass memorial plaque to Second Lieutenant Wingate, who died in action in The First World War, aged 21.





The flags shown on this page are those on the north side of the nave and the chancel. That is the Farnborough side, the side the organ is on. The flags are printed in the order in which they appear in the church. At the top of the page (numbered 1, 2 etc) are the flags nearest the main entrance of the church and at the bottom of this page are those nearest the apse. The flags are:

1. Royal Army Dental Corps
2. I Corps
3. Royal Corps of Transport
4. 52<sup>nd</sup> Lowland
5. The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment)
6. Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7. King's Own Scottish Borderers supported by bagpipe drone
8. Union Flag

9



10



11



12



13



14



15

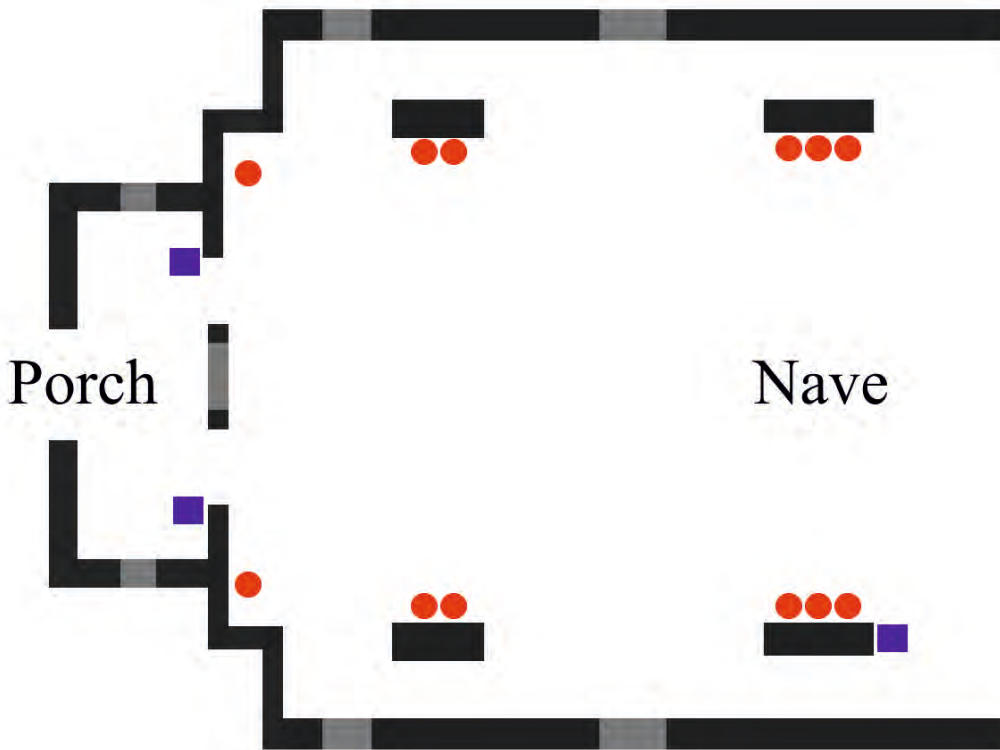


16



The flags shown on this page are those on the south side of the nave and the chancel. That is the Aldershot side, the side the Cameron Chapel is on. The flags are printed in the order in which they appear in the church. At the top of the page (numbered 9, 10 etc) are the flags nearest the main entrance of the church and at the bottom of the page are those nearest the apse. The flags are:

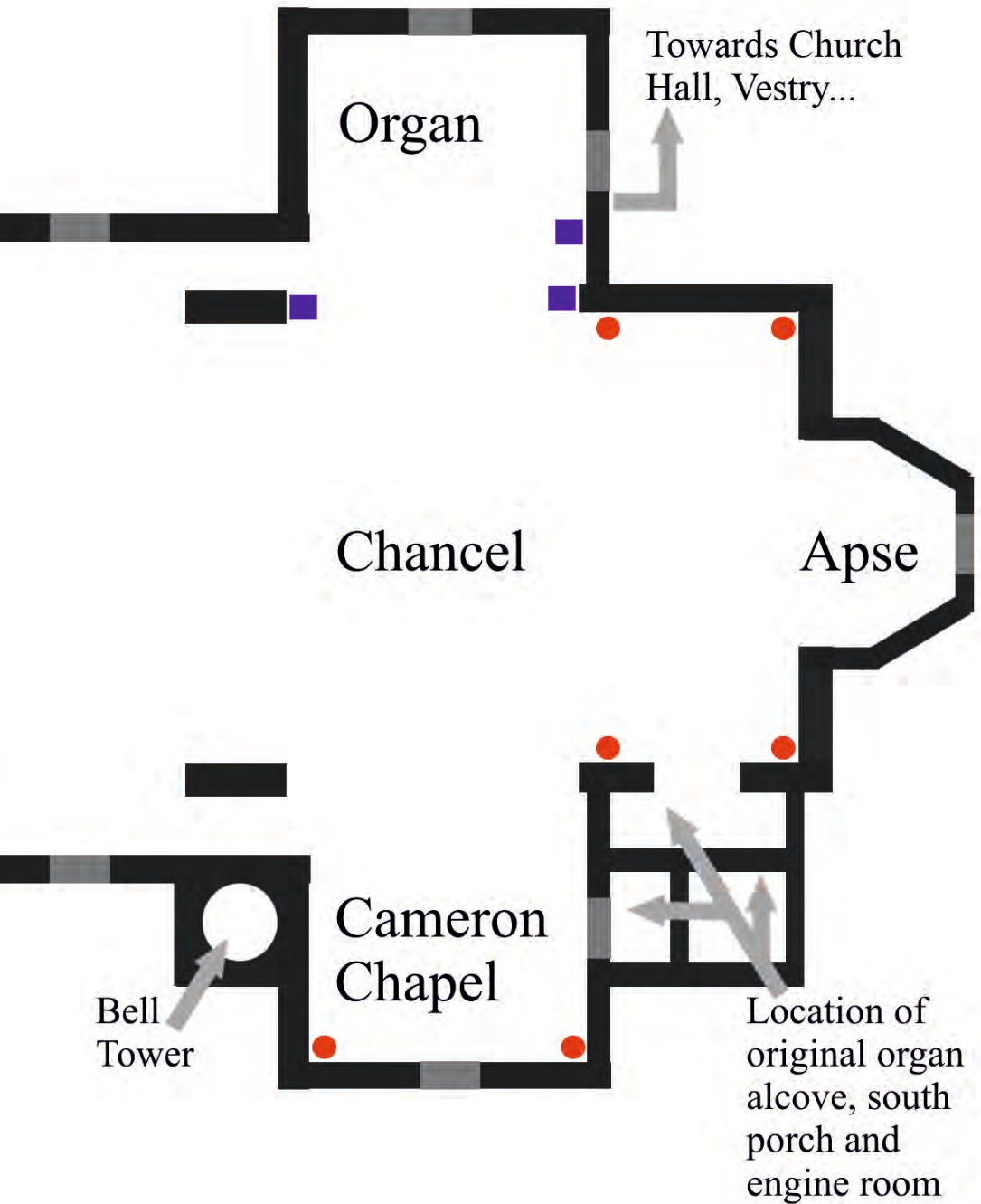
9. Army Catering Corps
10. Army Physical Training Corps
11. Royal Air Force
12. Royal Highland Fusiliers
13. Gordon Highlanders
14. King's Own Scottish Borderers
15. Royal Highland Fusiliers supported by bagpipe drone
16. Royal British Legion Scotland



● **Flag**

■ **Memorial Plaque**





# CAMERON CHAPEL



On 30<sup>th</sup> November 1975 (St Andrew's day) a new chapel in the church was dedicated. Initially called St Andrew's Memorial Chapel, it has come to be known as the Cameron Chapel. A new railing separating the chapel from the nave and a communion table plinth were specially commissioned for it.

The lectern in the Cameron Chapel is dedicated to the memory of the "*ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland who fell in the Great War 1914-1918*".

The font in the Chapel was given in memory of Major General KA Buchanan of the Seaforth Highlanders who died, in 1973.



There are two flags in the Chapel: one a plain St Andrew's Cross, the other a St Andrew's Cross with the military badge of the Queen's Own Highlanders (Seaforth & Camerons).



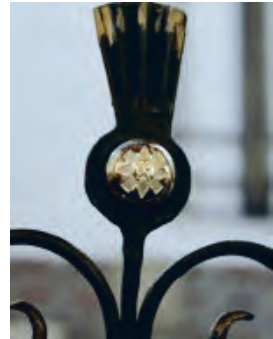


On the back wall of the Cameron Chapel are two wrought iron gates. Each gate has a large cross with the Church of Scotland badge in the centre, which is a burning bush surrounded by the motto "*nec tamen consumebatur*" meaning "*however not consumed*". The gates were made, during World War II, in Egypt, for a church, on an Army base there.

Following the withdrawal of the British army from Egypt in the 1950s the gates along with some stone carvings, which are discussed in the following pages, were taken initially to Cyprus, before ending up at St Andrew's, Aldershot. When the Cameron Chapel was partitioned off



from the main body of the church, in 1975, a railing was installed. The gates of that railing copy the design of the Egyptian gates. The railing has a thistle pattern. At the centre of each thistle is a small brass circle with a cap badge of a Scottish regiment (plus the badge of REME). Major Percy Chivers (REME) was responsible for making and casting the gates and screen.





There are 12 stones set into the brickwork of the back wall of the Cameron Chapel.

The stones show regimental crests, from the Second World War, principally of Scottish regiments. The designs generally appear to have been modelled on cap badges.



It was originally thought that the stones and gates were made by German prisoners of war. This is probably incorrect. Further research has found fairly strong evidence that the stones were carved by one British soldier, who was possibly injured and recovering at the time. There is contemporaneous evidence, from the 1940s, of such stones being located at two war time Army Churches of Scotland in Egypt, namely St Andrew's Kirk, Geneifa, Egypt (in the Canal Zone), and St Margaret's Church in Abbassia (near Cairo). The stones at St Andrew's Aldershot almost certainly come from one or other of those two churches.



Following the withdrawal of British troops from Egypt, in the mid 1950s, the Army church was closed. The stones were then moved, first to Cyprus for a number of years, then to St Andrew's Garrison Church, Aldershot. Some are in good condition, others are badly worn.



The six stones shown on this page are from top to bottom:

- London Scottish
- Royal Scots Fusiliers
- The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles)
- King's Own Scottish Borderers
- Cameron Highlanders
- Seaforth Highlanders







The six stones shown on this page are from top to bottom:

- Black Watch
- Highland Light Infantry
- Royal Army Medical Corps
- Gordon Highlanders
- Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
- *TOP*: Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service; *LEFT*: probably - Territorial Army Nursing Service (the centre of this badge is so badly worn that exact identification is difficult); *RIGHT*: Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service Reserve

# THE ORGAN



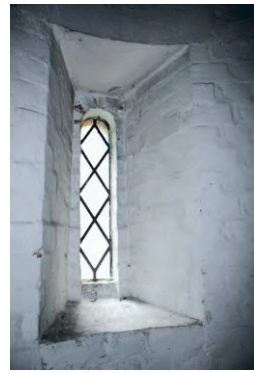
The organ at St Andrew's is about thirty years older than the church building itself. It dates from 1897 and was originally installed in St Ninian's Church of Scotland, Leith. The organ was built by William Hill & Son.

In 1984, following the merger of St Ninian's Church with North Leith & Bonnington Church, the organ was kindly gifted to St Andrew's, Aldershot. Prior to this point St Andrew's had used a succession of electric organs.

The organ was restored and moved to Aldershot in 1984.

The organ console was restored and upgraded, more recently, in 2018.

# OTHER ROOMS



The original church was built with a number of small rooms attached to it - an alcove for the organ, a second porch (on the south side of the church) smaller than the main porch, an engine room, a vestry, a toilet, and a bell tower. The vestry remains, but most of the others are used as storage space today.

When the church nave was extended in the 1930s the height of the bell tower was reduced. Photographs of the inside of the bell tower are shown above.



At the time of the extension work in the late 1930s, the original church bell, weighing over two hundredweight, disappeared never to be recovered.



In the 1950s, a church hall and related rooms, including a crèche, were built as a memorial to all members of the Church of Scotland and kindred presbyterian churches who gave their lives in the Second World War. The hall was formally opened on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1959.





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