

St. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH

Chipping Barnet

*...a church at the heart of the community, serving the people of Chipping Barnet,
worshipping Jesus who is at the centre of our shared life together...*



Tower Information

We hope you enjoy your visit

Introduction

The Tower was constructed in 1875 when Butterfield designed and built the expanded church you see today. The Tower was moved southwest from its former position at the western end of the medieval aisle, to its current position at the end of the new Victorian aisle. The window at the west end, above the glass doors, is the only piece of modern glass in the church and was installed following a fire in 1974. It shows St John the Baptist, to whom the church is dedicated, baptising Jesus.

There are leaflets available in the church about the stained glass and the carved wood. The font cover is quite unusual and the 159 pew ends are all different, depicting scenes from the Bible and history. The Tower is 96 feet (30 metres) high and from the top there are expansive views over London and Hertfordshire, extending on clear days to Kent and Essex. Look out for the bell rope hanging inside the main Church door.

Ringling Chamber

As you go up the Tower the first room is the ringing chamber where the bells are rung. There are eight bells and you will see seven of the eight ropes hooked up to the spider in the centre of the ceiling. When the bell ringers have finished ringing, the bell ropes are stored this way, safely out of reach. The eighth rope (the No 4 bell) is secured safely to one side because this is the bell which is rung for daily services using the rope you spotted earlier, that can be seen going through the floor beneath the cupboard on the right. The small numbered mats, on the floor, were sewn by bell ringers and friends. They are numbered according to the bell above each mat. When the bells are rung the rope drops to the floor and hits the mat, which in turn saves the carpet from excessive wear and tear. This room also houses the mechanism for the church clock installed new in 1875, once wound by hand but now electrified. You can see the weight to the left of the casing. On the wall is a framed picture of Arthur T King who is credited with being the founding father of the present Middlesex Association of Bell Ringers.

If you are interested in bell ringing and having a try, call Nancy Surman, the Ringing Master, on 020 8440 9498. Practice is on Monday evenings at 7.45 – please come along.

The Bells

Going further up the tower you will next pass the bell chamber. Look inside at the eight bells, which were rehung in 1992. There have been bells at St John the Baptist since at least 1423: how do we know? The Rector and the Priest were reprimanded for not ringing the bells in honour of the Archbishop of Canterbury who was passing through Barnet sometime in that year. The offence was repeated the following year and the Archbishop is said to have ordered the church doors to be sealed as a punishment! These days we make a point of ringing when any Bishops visit.

For many years there were six bells in the 1420 church but in 1875 two bells were added to make the current eight. The bell nearest to you is the Tenor which is the largest bell and beyond, in the middle of the bells, is the treble or smallest. The other bells are arranged in order, clockwise, around the Tower. The bells are tuned in the key of 'D'. Bell weights are traditionally given in hundredweights, quarters and pounds.

The following table shows their weights. Just to help you there are 28 pounds in a quarter and four quarters in a hundredweight.

The Bells	Weight in hundredweights – quarters – pounds	Equivalent weight in kilos (stones & pounds)
Treble or No. 1	6 – 1 – 12	323.6Kg (50 st 12 lbs)
No. 2	6 – 3 – 20	352.7Kg (55 st 6 lbs)
No. 3	7 – 3 – 16	401.8Kg (63 st 4 lbs)
No. 4	8 – 2 – 18	440.9Kg (69 st 4 lbs)
No. 5	10 – 3 – 8	550.9Kg (86 st 8 lbs)
No. 6	12 – 0 – 8	614.5Kg (96 st 8 lbs)
No. 7	16 – 0 – 0	814.5 Kg (128 st)
Tenor or No.8	22 – 3 – 15	1165 Kg (183 st 1 lb)

When the bells are not in use they are 'rung down', i.e. their open ends are pointing down. In the English tradition of bell ringing the bells move in a full circle from the 'up' position, i.e. with their ends pointing upwards, to the up position and then back again. The clapper strikes the bell at the end of the complete circle. You will be able to see the new red metal headstocks and there is a spare red clapper, which you may be able to see, on the floor. These bells were originally hung on wooden headstocks but in 1992 were rehung and retuned. Each bell has a quotation from the Bible engraved on it. When you go back down the Tower, look on the wall opposite the Tower door for a list of the bells with their individual quotations.

The Roof

And so on up to the roof. The view from the roof depends very much on the weather and very hot days are not always the clearest. Things to look out for include:

- The arch on top of Wembley Stadium
- Alexandra Palace
- Canary Warf
- Tower 42 (formerly known as The NatWest Tower)
- The British Telecom (Post Office) Tower
- The O2 Millenium Dome
- The Olympic site
- The Shard
- And the very top of the London Eye.

On a really clear day, and with the help of binoculars, you can see:

- The Queen Elizabeth Bridge at Dartford / Purfleet
- Crystal Palace TV mast
- The tower of St Albans Abbey and beyond this, to the North West, Ivinghoe Beacon on Dunstable Downs.
- You can also just see (to the North East) the water tower by the M11 at Harlow.

More local places include the Medical Research Station in Mill Hill, Barnet House at Whetstone, the Odeon Cinema, and train spotters can see the line from Kings Cross to Scotland (easier if a train goes by) – just look in front of the gasometers in New Barnet.

Barnet is the highest point on the old coaching route from London to York and whichever direction they approached from the horses had to climb up to Barnet. Hence, the large number of hostelryes, where the horses would have been changed. There are, in fact, considerably less now than there used to be.

Elevation

When you go back down to ground level look at the old entrance on the south side of the Church (Wood Street). There is a metal plate across the door and this is at the same height as the top of St Paul's Cathedral, which is 365 feet (111 metres) high – one foot for every day of the year. When you stand at the top of the Tower facing east you are about 460 feet (168 metres) above sea level and there isn't anything much higher until you reach the Urals on the Eastern borders of Russia.

Church Services

Sundays

8.00am Eucharist (Book of Common Prayer)
9.30am Sung Eucharist
11.15am Family Service (not 3rd Sunday)
6.30pm Choral Evensong

Weekday Services

9.15am Morning Prayer
(Monday to Saturday)
10.30am Wednesday Holy Communion