



Christ Church Bath



A brief history and guide



A distinctive history

Christ Church has many points of interest but three main claims to historical significance: it was probably the first church in England since the Reformation open to all without pew rents; it was the first neo-Gothic church built in Bath; and it is the oldest of the few proprietary chapels still being used for worship, standing outside the Church of England parish system.

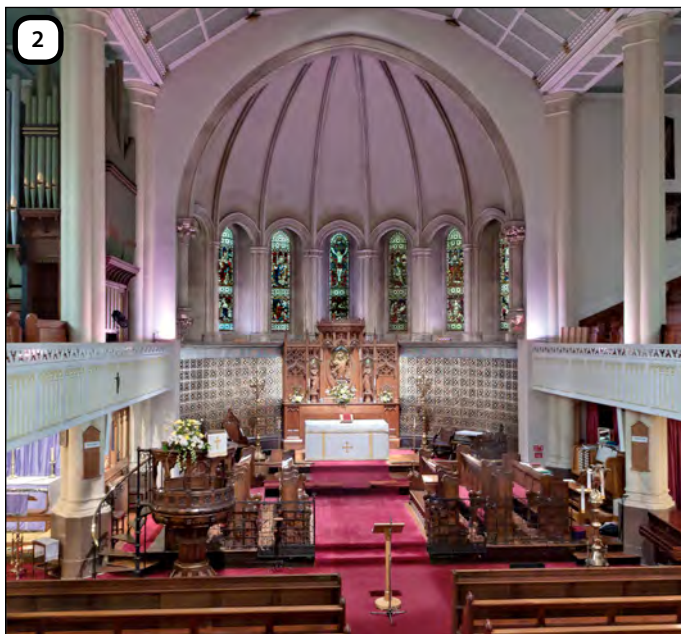
Christ Church was founded at the end of the 18th century by a group of devout churchmen concerned that the system of pew rents, the norm at the time, had the effect of excluding the less well-to-do from worship. Rev. Charles Daubeny (1745-1827), who had originally come to Bath in the winter of 1790 for health reasons, took a leading role, and his first sermon in aid of the so-called "Free Church" project raised more than £1,200 in donations and pledges – a huge sum considering that the total building cost eventually came to £4,065.

The foundation stone was laid in 1795, and Christ Church was consecrated on 7 November 1798 by Charles Moss, Bishop of Bath and Wells. Daubeny became the new church's first incumbent. There is a memorial tablet to him on the west wall at the back of the church (as well as boards commemorating his successors).

Christ Church was probably the first church in England since the Reformation not to charge pew rents – at least not in the nave; rents were still charged for seating in the gallery in order to provide an income to cover the incumbent's stipend and other necessary expenses. This stopped happening as the whole practice of pew renting gradually died out, but it's not clear exactly when.

Christ Church stands geographically within the parish of Walcot but is not administratively part of that parish, nor has it ever been a parish church itself. Instead, it is still a proprietary chapel, sometimes known with slight amusement as a "Peculiar in Ordinary" (as distinct from a Royal Peculiar), owned and managed by a charitable trust.

This page: 1: Christ Church from the south-west. **2:** The east end before the 2020 reordering (see page 8). **3:** A portrait of Archdeacon Daubeny hanging at the back of the church (artist unknown).



The founders of Christ Church

The original trust deed (dated 6 May 1801) is signed by: Humphry Sumner D.D., Provost of King's College, Cambridge; John Sibley, Rector of Walcot, Bath; Charles Daubeny, Vicar of North Bradley, Wiltshire, and later (1804) Archdeacon of Sarum (Salisbury); William Leigh, Rector of Little Plumstead, Norfolk; and Martin Stafford Smith, Rector of Fladbury, Worcester, and godfather of John Keble, a founder of the Oxford Movement. Early supporters included: John Moore, the Archbishop of Canterbury; William Wilberforce, the great evangelical and campaigner against slavery; and George Pitt, first Lord Rivers, who provided the land on which Christ Church was built.

The place and time

Christ Church is situated on the lower slopes of Lansdown, just north of Bath's city centre. It stands on Julian Road, which dates from Roman times and was so named after Julius Caesar, but this happened only in the 1860s – before then it was known as Cottle's Lane, and to the Romans it was simply Iter XIV or "Road 14" (though it was part of the Julian Way, the main road linking Bath to London and Bristol).

When Christ Church was built in the late 18th century, Bath's population was booming – it more than doubled from an estimated 15,000 in 1770 to some 33,000 in 1800 – and building development had started to spread over what had been fields in the area; The Vineyards, a stretch of buildings around the corner on The Paragon (see map, page 20), is so named because vineyards had covered the slopes on the western side of the road up until about 1730.

In 1793 a special act of Parliament, the Walcot Somerset Improvement Act, empowered Bath's Corporation to extend services such as street lighting north of Cottle's Lane, but Cottle's Lane marked Bath's city limits until the municipal reforms of 1835. This is why the showpieces of fashionable Georgian Bath, though nearby, are all to the south, including the Royal Crescent and the Circus (see picture 8). The Assembly Rooms, designed by John Wood the Younger in 1769 and opened in 1771 to serve the fast-expanding upper town (hence their original name, "Upper Assembly Rooms"), are barely three minutes' walk down the hill.

Development along Cottle's Lane itself had begun in the 1760s at the Lansdown Road end with Montpelier, a short terrace of five houses (of which four survive – see page 6). Adjacent to this sprang up Bath's first riding school; where Christ Church stands was its exercise yard. Next came a Real Tennis court, built in 1777 and now the Museum of Bath at Work, close behind Christ Church.

However, the area was not just a playground for the wealthy; it was always very mixed, with artisans' cottages and other cheaper housing spreading along Cottle's Lane, Morford Street and Ballance Street in the decade or so after about 1773. To this day our local streets include some of the wealthiest and some of the poorest in the city.

What's more, the 1790s, when Christ Church was conceived and built, were volatile times politically, economically and socially. The revolutionary government of France declared war on England and the Netherlands in February 1793, and the subsequent financial crash in Britain brought an abrupt halt to Bath's building boom when Bath's biggest bank failed and many of the city's leading architects, developers and builders were ruined. After the outbreak of war with Spain in 1796 and British Government overspending amid fears of a French invasion, there was an even bigger national banking crisis in 1797. In 1799 the Government went so far as to introduce income tax. This was to pay for the war against Napoleon; the tax was suspended for a short time during the truce of 1802, but was reimposed in 1803 and lasted till 1815.

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Proprietary chapels

Proprietary chapels are places of worship that are privately owned but open to the public (as distinct from private chapels in palaces, homes or institutions such as hospitals or schools). Population growth in the late 1700s and early 1800s, particularly in urban areas, meant more demand for church seats, but proprietary chapels catered predominantly for the well-off. Even at their peak around 1810-1830, there were only about 50 in operation at any one time, most in London and the rest mainly in other fashionable towns: four sprang up in Brighton between 1824 and 1827, and four in Cheltenham from 1823 to 1840. When Christ Church was opened, there were already six in Bath, three of them established 1794-1796, but all six served the wealthy who flocked to the spa town. The Octagon Chapel (founded 1767) even had "box seats" like a theatre's, "the more expensive being like small rooms, each furnished with its own fireplace and easy chairs."

There may have been as many as 200 proprietary chapels founded in all, though under 100 have been identified. About eight to ten survive as such today. The rest have been closed, absorbed into a parish or turned into official parish churches.

The place and time (continued)



Photo © Bath in Time – Bath Preservation Trust, Building of Bath Collection

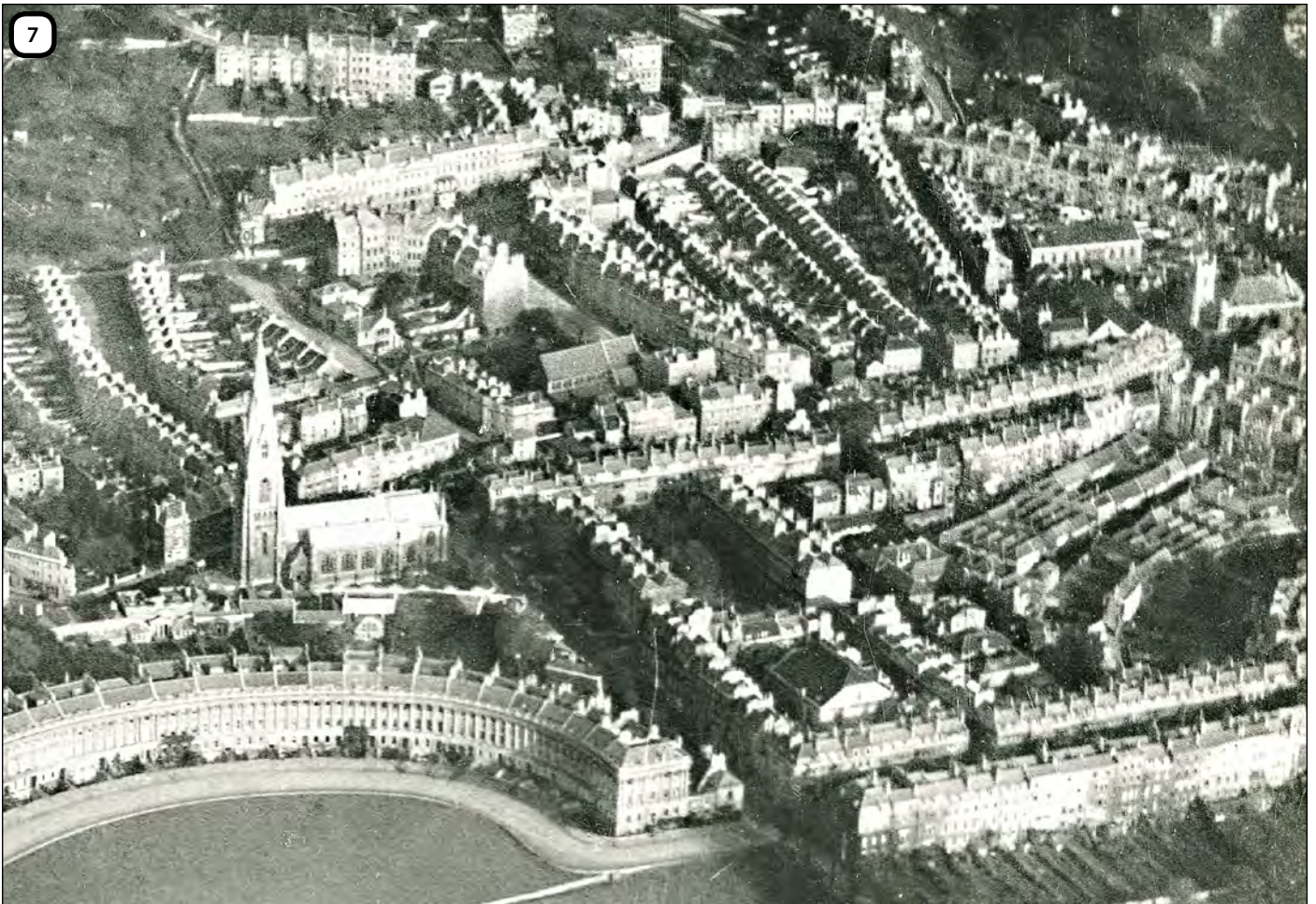
Despite all this, more than 160 initial subscribers gave generously to the appeal to found a “Free Church” in Bath. They would have known that for the less well-off, the 1790s were if anything even tougher times. There were poor harvests almost every year from 1789 to 1795, and the price of grain soared. Civil unrest grew. In 1794 the Government suspended Habeas Corpus (the law that protected Britons from arbitrary detention) and put a number of reform agitators on trial for treason; when they were all acquitted, it passed the so-called “gagging acts” in 1795 restricting public meetings, and in 1799 the “combination laws” outlawing trade unionism.

We must also recognise that much of Bath’s wealth at the time derived, directly or indirectly, from the trafficking and exploitation of enslaved people. Although Wilberforce was among the founders of Christ Church, the abolition of



This page: 5: The former riding school buildings to the west of Christ Church in 1890. The middle building bears a cross because it was used as a Roman Catholic church from August 1852 until the opening of Our Lady Help of Christians (St. Mary’s) R.C. church in 1881. (Photo from *Historic Houses of Bath* by R.E.M. Peach.) **6:** The same area in 1973, shortly before the two more distant buildings were demolished for a housing development (photo by Lesley Green-Armytage). **7:** Aerial view looking north, c.1930. Christ Church can be seen at the far right, and the nearby Ballance Street/Lampards Buildings area as it was before the devastation of the Bath Blitz in April 1942. The imposing St. Andrew’s church looms large behind the Royal Crescent. (Photo by A.W. Hobart.) **Facing page: 8:** The entire north city area as it is today.

Photo © Bath in Time – Bath Central Library Collection



the slave trade was still in the future, and inevitably some of the funds donated ultimately derived from this source.

Bath's first proprietary chapel, St. Mary's, Queen Square, opened in 1734. By the end of the century there was a fad for founding chapels public and private. Among these was the Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel (1765) in The Vineyards, the first significant Gothic-style building in Bath.

After Christ Church, several more churches were built in the north city area, including St. Stephen's, Lansdown (begun 1840), St. Mary's R.C. church (opened 1881) and notably St. Andrew's, built 1869-73 to the design of Sir George Gilbert Scott. Its spire was completed in 1878 and at 220 feet (67 metres) was the tallest landmark in Bath (see picture 7). St. Andrew's was bombed in the Bath Blitz of April 1942 (along with much else in the Julian Road area), and its ruins were finally cleared in about 1960.

Pew rents

Churches often had stalls for the clergy, and some started installing benches from the 13th century onwards, but they weren't usually fitted with pews for the congregation until the Reformation, when the growing importance given to sermons led to longer services. At first it was common for members of a congregation to build their own pews (and retain ownership of them, which is why box pews were often lockable). Increasingly, though, pews were provided in return for payment of a regular rent. This became standard practice in churches of many denominations, and in a few places is reported to have continued right through the 20th century.

Photo © Microsoft



The building

According to its Listed Building citation (Grade II, 1950), Christ Church is “the first of the larger neo-Gothic churches in Bath” (though many of the exterior features you see today were modified or added later). Internally, however, when built, it was a late-18th-century galleried “preaching house”; the classical proportions and relative plainness of the interior can still seem surprising after the Gothic exterior.

As the ideas of the Oxford Movement spread in the Church of England in the mid 19th century, numerous churches were redecorated in a more Gothic style. In 1844 the galleries in Christ Church were lowered 19 inches and their fronts were pierced and ornamented. In 1861 the Trustees purchased No. 5 Montpelier, the house adjacent to the east of the building, demolished it, and constructed a curved apse (picture 11) designed by John Elkington Gill, the leading architect of his day in Bath. This was completed in 1866 (coincidentally the same year in which John Keble died). The carved stone fleurons with which the apse is tiled, also designed by Gill, were added in 1871, as were the stained glass windows above by Clayton & Bell.

The property to the north and west of the church building was purchased in 1851, and some cottages and stables standing there were demolished to create open space outside the building and provide for a small extension at the north side, mainly for an enlarged choir vestry (see picture 41). A new north staircase was added to improve access to the gallery, and a new entrance created in the west wall beside the tower. (Up to this



time the entrance had been on the south side of the porch at the south-west corner of the building; there's still a door there, though sealed-up and out of use.) In 1855 a new staircase, lobby and entrance were built to the south of the tower and other alterations were made, possibly including the relocation of the doors on the south side of the building. The main west door through the tower was constructed in 1858 or '59. The entrance and lobby were renovated and new glass inner doors installed in 2017.

The present battlemented parapet, octagonal turrets and pinnacles were added in 1908 by Wallace Gill, son of John Elkington Gill. A clock was first inserted in the tower "to give the time to the neighbourhood" at Easter 1849; the clock backplate bears the name of George Wadham, Bath.

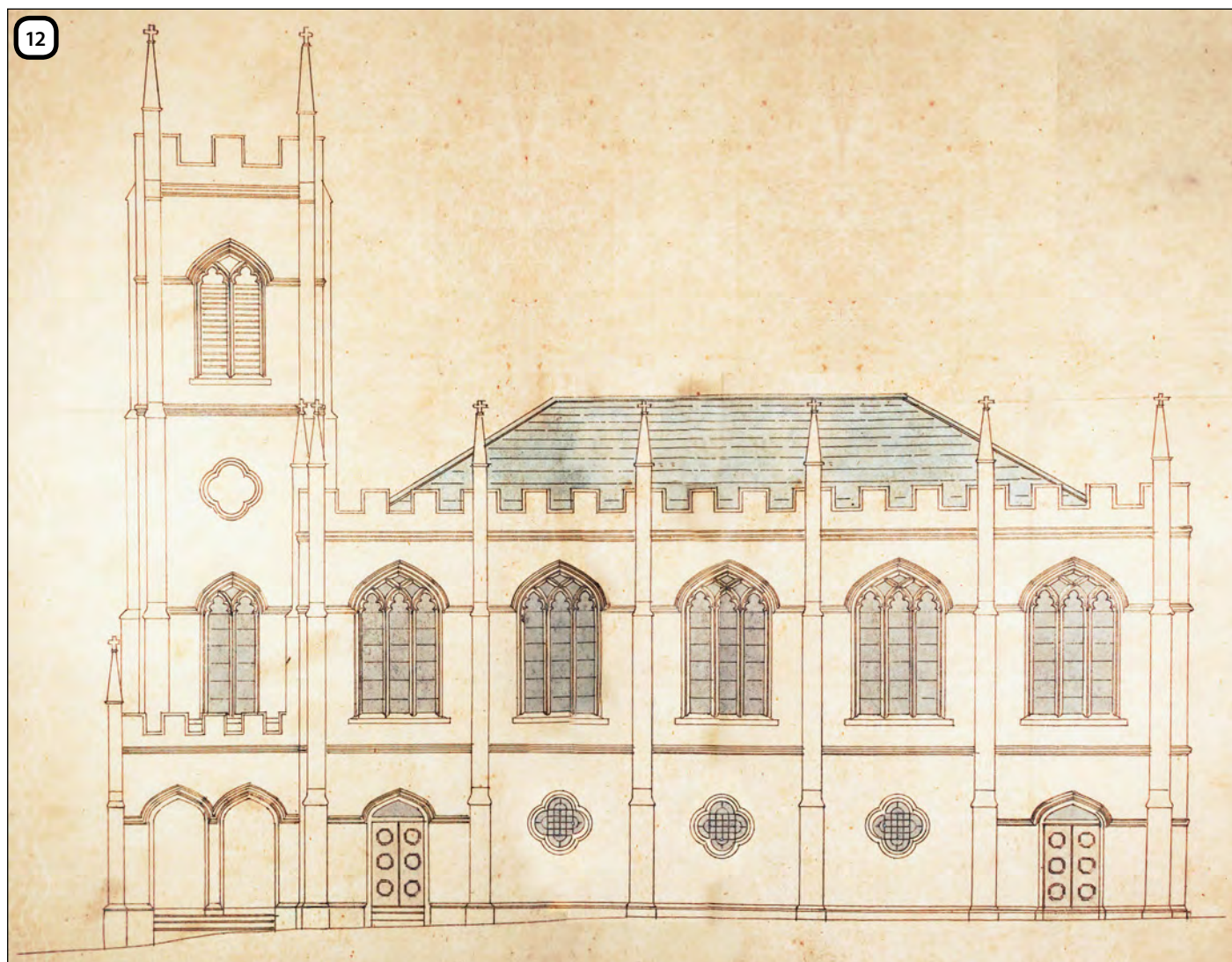
In 1973 the south-west porch was converted into a kitchen and a W.C. (architects N.W.S. Tolson, Bath), and the interior was redecorated. The kitchen was refitted in 2011. The W.C. was divided into two in 1989, and refurbished in 2016 to comply with modern accessibility requirements.

The apse was reroofed in 1977. The tower underwent stonework repairs and reroofing in 1981, then further cleaning and restoration in 1984. After damage by fire in 1987, the choir vestry at the north-west was repaired and restored. In late 2021 it was reroofed again and its insulation upgraded. The main roof was repaired in 1996.

John Palmer, architect

The building was designed by John Palmer (c.1738-1817), one of the leading architects of the time – among other works, he designed the parish church of St. Swithin's, Walcot (1777–1780); Lansdown Crescent (1789–93, the second-largest crescent in Bath); Kensington Chapel, London Road (1794–95, another of Bath's proprietary chapels, which closed in 1929); and St. James's Square (1790–93, the largest square in Bath – see picture 8). Palmer served as Bath's City Architect 1792–1817, and had a hand in the most celebrated projects of the time, including the Grand Pump Room, additions to the Royal Mineral Water Hospital, and the building of the Theatre Royal, Bath.

Facing page: 9: The apse and altar. **10:** The pre-1861 east wall (original photographer unknown). **11:** The apse in c.1867 (original photographer unknown). **This page: 12:** The south elevation in 1855. Architectural drawing by Thomas Fuller (see page 18).



The interior

The **pulpit** was originally high up on the wall within the communion rails; in 1844 it was brought out into the nave, but on the south side of the central aisle (see picture 10). In 1867 it was replaced by a new pulpit (see picture 11). This was slightly raised and moved to the north side of the aisle in 1895, then brought further out into the nave in the 2020 reordering (picture 15). The pulpit steps in place today were constructed in 1910.

In 1858 cracks were observed in the **ceiling**, and iron tension bars were inserted in the roof structure to stop it spreading. The present ceiling (picture 13) dates from 1861.

The carved oak **reredos** (picture 14) was installed in 1905 (architect Edward Howes; artists H.H. Martyn & Co. of Cheltenham, who among other things were later responsible for the architectural decoration work on the SS *Queen Mary*). It was endowed by Mr. and Mrs. Paul Jolly; he was then head of the department store that still bears the name of the family, prominent in Bath for generations.

The plated, enameled **altar cross** (1947) was designed to harmonise with the two silver **candlesticks** given in 1798 by Daubeny. The **eagle lectern** is dated 1890 and the two large free-standing **candelabra** behind the altar 1910. Choir stalls were first erected in 1885, and new stalls (see picture 2) installed in 1910 (architect Frederick



This page: 13: The ceiling. 14: The carved reredos. 15: The pulpit, with the War Memorial on the wall in the background. 16: The windows in the south gallery, viewed from the west gallery. (See pages 13-14 for a closer view.)

Bligh Bond). These, along with the Victorian wrought-iron chancel rail, were removed in the reordering in 2020.

The oak **War Memorial** (see pictures 15 and 18) dates from March 1919. The **Lady Chapel** in the north-east (picture 18) was formed in 1937 (architects The Warham Guild, London), the St. Michael chapel in the south in 2020.

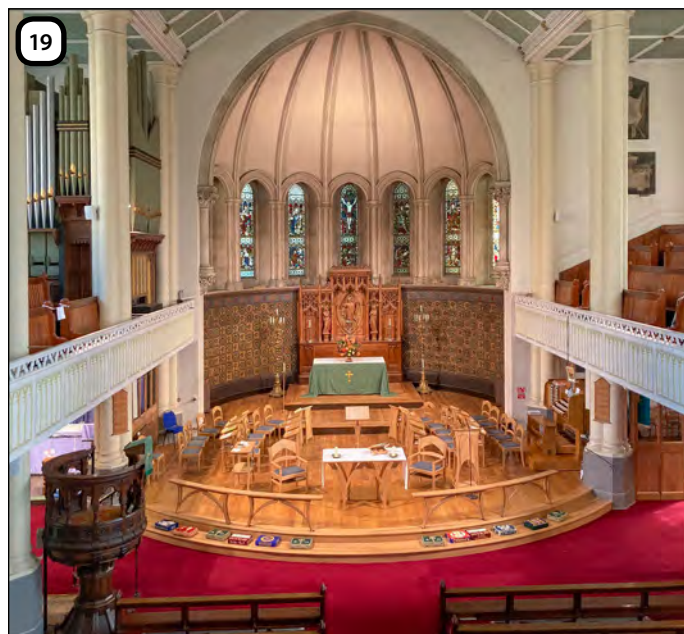
Because it was not a parish church, baptisms were not allowed in Christ Church until 1876, and the **font** (picture 20) dates from this time; the cover was added in 1918. In order to create a more open and thus more usable space at the back of the church, the font was moved from there to its present location in the south aisle in 1973.

Records show that by 1835 the building was lit by oil lamps, and gas lighting was installed in 1859, making evening services practicable for the first time. Electric lighting was first installed in 1897, renovated in 1939 as part of a major redecoration, and rewired in 1981. A new lighting system was installed in 2008, making it possible to remove the 1930s pendant lamps which had hung from the ceiling at about gallery rail level. The effect was to open up the nave and improve visibility from the gallery (which is, however, now used only for concerts and special occasions). In 2020 brighter chancel lighting was added, along with improved illumination of the vaulted apse roof.

The armorial bosses

Four of the bosses along the central ridge of the ceiling display coats of arms. The first near the east end are those of George Wyndham Kennion, Bishop of Bath and Wells 1894-1921, suggesting that the bosses, at least in their present form, date from the ceiling refurbishment that took place in 1904. Next are the arms of the Bishopric of Canterbury, then those of the Bishopric of Bath and Wells (though this form does not match the present official arms or the arms of any particular bishop). At the west end the arms are those of the City of Bath.

This page: 17: Armorial ceiling boss with the arms of the See of Bath (the interlocked keys) and the See of Wells. **18:** The Lady Chapel. The War Memorial is on the wall at the left. **19:** A view from the west gallery showing the extended chancel, curved chancel step echoing the curve of the apse, and new communion table and choir furniture by Treske of North Yorkshire. **20:** The baptismal font.



Music and the organ

Little is known for certain about the role of music in worship at Christ Church in the earliest years, but it must be significant that construction of the first organ was begun within a year after the church was opened. The Anglican choral tradition has been embraced at least since Victorian times, and the choir was one of the first in Bath to be robed in cassocks and surplices. Today the tradition and quality of music at Christ Church form one of its most distinctive, even defining, characteristics.

The original organ, built by John Avery of London in 1799-1800, was located in the west gallery. Some additions were made in 1844 by George Sherborne. In 1850 the organ was reconstructed by John Clark of Bath; in 1855 he set it back three feet, and new pews were constructed at the front and sides of it. Following the ceiling repairs in 1861, the organ was found to be in need of an urgent cleaning. Clark carried this out and also made other modifications, including the addition of new keys and pedals. In 1886 the organ was rebuilt and moved to its present location at the east end of the north gallery (picture 21) by W.G. Vowles of Bristol.

It's possible that Vowles undertook some improvements in 1891. In 1892, at any rate, William Sweetland made various alterations, including "lightening of touch". In 1896-98, among other things, a hydraulic blower was installed, and in 1906 a hydraulic keyboard.

In 1914 an inspection was commissioned from Hubert W. Hunt, organist of Bristol Cathedral, who recommended urgent improvements both mechanical and tonal. Another alarming report was made by Griffen & Stroud in 1920, but no major work seems to have been undertaken until 1939-40, when that firm dismantled and repaired the organ. Griffen & Stroud also converted the action to tubular pneumatic, incorporating a full complement of thumb and pedal toe pistons.

Substantial repairs were carried out in 1964 and again in 1979-80, the latter to the specifications of George Osmond & Co. of Taunton. In 1987-88 a major restoration was undertaken by Robin Winn of Bath. As part of this



This page: 21: The organ, viewed from the nave. 22: The organ from the north gallery. 23: The 1988 console (original photographer unknown). Note the unusual stop-tabs in two rows at the top; compare the banks of draw-stops at either side of the keyboards on the present console in picture 26.

work, some of the Avery/Clark pipework was reinstated, the reeds were revoiced, an electric action was installed and the pedal department was expanded using the extension principle. A detached console was introduced, positioned at the south side of the choir stalls roughly where the present console stands but orientated such that the organist faced west (see picture 23). Curiously, the console was not of traditional design but had two rows of stop-tabs above the swell manual rather than draw-stops in jambs at either side of the keyboards.

Unfortunately, serious problems soon surfaced. Dumb notes and ciphers increased in number and required constant attention. By 1995 the organ was practically unusable, and in 1996 it was silenced completely. In that year, The Deane Organ Builders of Taunton were engaged to undertake a thorough renovation. By the end of the year, the first stage was completed and the organ was partially usable again. The electric action was replaced with an electro-pneumatic under-action, backed up by a digital system to communicate with a refurbished console (pictures 24 and 26), brought from a redundant church in Oldham and refitted.

In tandem with a concerted fundraising effort, the renovation proceeded in stages, and work was completed in June 2003. The excellence of the refurbished organ, along with the building's outstanding dry acoustics, now make Christ Church a popular choice of venue for concerts organised by local secular organisations including the Bath Festival and the University of Bath, among others.

In November 2016, a substantial chunk of defective plaster on the east gallery wall collapsed into the organ. Nicholson & Co. of Malvern undertook the repair and restoration of the damaged pipes and other components, along with some long-planned general refurbishments, and the work was completed in June 2019.

This page: 24: Our organist at the present-day console.
25: The choir leading a hymn during one of our Sunday Eucharists. **26:** The organ console.

Photo 26: Marie Pigot



Organ recitals

Christ Church has enjoyed a tradition of organ recitals to inaugurate the organ after major work on it. Avery's original organ was officially opened on 14 February 1800 with a performance of Handel's *Messiah*. A special chorus and an orchestra of prominent local musicians were conducted by Venanzio Rauzzini, a renowned Italian tenor and conductor who had settled in Bath. The organ was played by Joseph Wilkins, formerly organist of St. James's church, Bath. According to contemporary reports the concert was a great success, and it raised enough to pay off everything still owing from the building of the church.

On 11 November 1886 the rebuilt organ was officially opened at a special service followed by a recital given by Christ Church's organist of the day, John Foote, and then another recital in the afternoon by George Riseley, organist of Bristol Cathedral.

In 1940, the renovated organ was inaugurated on 9 May with a recital given by Dr. W.H. Harris, organist of St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. On 7 June 2003 there was a concert by the eminent concert organist David Briggs, Organist Emeritus of Gloucester Cathedral.



The windows

The original ground floor quatrefoil windows (see picture 12) were replaced in 1891 with the “Te Deum” windows. These are so called because they depict various angels, saints and prophets praising God, with a passage from the *Te Deum Laudamus* carved on the stone sill of each. The east window of the choir vestry (picture 29) is one of the set but slightly different: it depicts choristers and has the words on the glass instead of the sill. The ten Te Deum windows are by A.O. Hemming of London; their cost was £406/15/0, which was raised by public subscription.

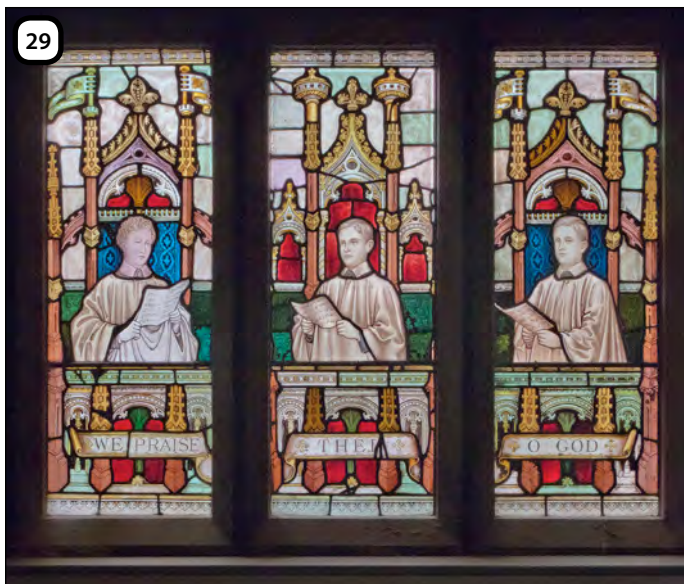
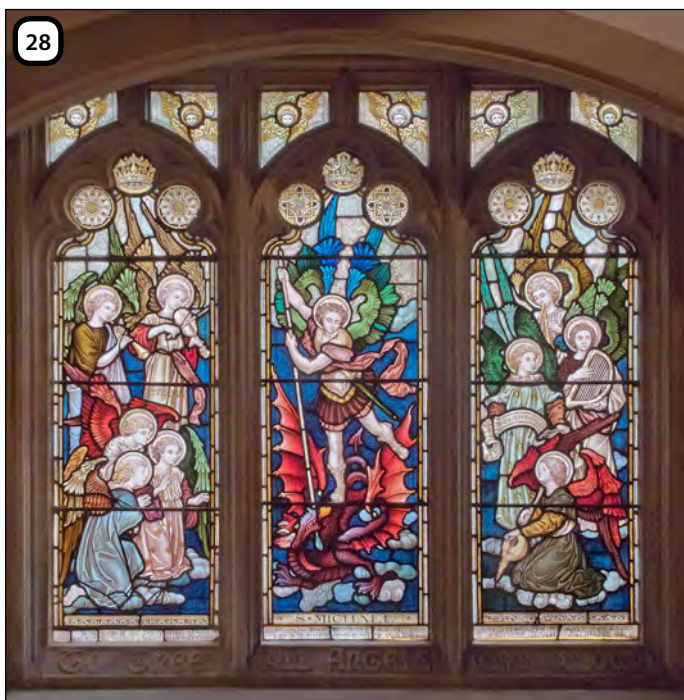
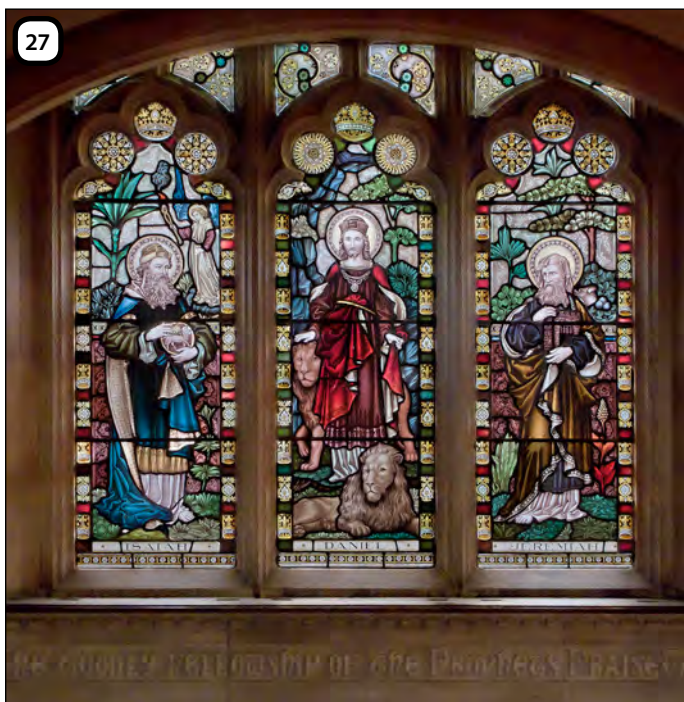
The two windows at the east of the south gallery, also by Hemming, are slightly earlier (1890). The first (nearest the apse – picture 31) depicts Christ the Good Shepherd; the next (picture 32) the Good Samaritan, with the Beatitudes in the eight upper tracery panels.

There are two splendid windows on the west wall at gallery level, both by James Powell & Sons, Whitefriars Glass Works, London. The one north of the tower (the right as you face west – picture 34) depicts Christ raising the daughter of Jairus from the dead. It was unveiled in 1901. The window to the south (left of the tower – picture 33) depicts Christ enthroned and was dedicated in 1902.

This page: 27: One of Hemming’s “Te Deum” windows in the nave.

28: Te Deum window in the south-east corner of the nave, now the St. Michael chapel. **29:** Te Deum window in the choir vestry. **30:** Detail of three of the windows by Clayton & Bell in the apse.

Following pages: 31, 32: The hard-to-see windows in the south-east of the gallery. **33, 34:** The windows in the west wall at gallery level.











Secrets of the bell tower

In the west wall at the back of the gallery, above the crucifix (picture 36), there's a boarded-up vent, once part of a clever ventilation system. In the tower behind it was a large gas ring, which heated the air in the conduit behind the vent. As the heated air was released outside, this drew in the stale air from the nave which had risen to the ceiling. It's not clear when this ingenious technology was installed, but records show that a gas supply was first introduced and "ventilating traps" (fresh air inlets) were fitted in the outer walls beneath the galleries in 1858-59.

The tower had more conventional uses too: a peal of eight bells hung in a wood and iron frame inside it (picture 35). In 1801 the Rev. John Sibley, Rector of Walcot, one of the founders of Christ Church, gave the "Great Bell", which apparently was the only bell for some time. By 1849 this had cracked, and in that year it was recast and rehung with three new bells cast in Bristol by William Cary. A new "ringing floor" was built when the tower and porch were altered in autumn 1855. In 1867 the four bells were recast by Mears and Stainbank, two bells added and the frame extended to hold the six. Two more bells were added in 1873; one was recast in 1874 by John Warner & Sons.

General deterioration of the frames and fittings made ringing problematic, possibly as early as 1912; by 1922 the bells could no longer be rung at all. Partial restoration in 1979 and again in 1986 made only limited ringing possible. By 2013 the bells were declared unsafe to ring, and the tenor bell was found to be cracked. We decided to replace the bells, frames and fittings, and also add sound control measures to reduce the loudness of the bells nearby.

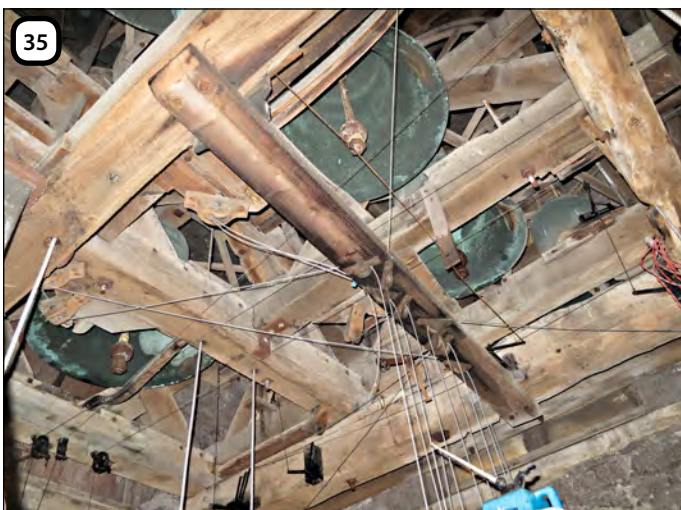
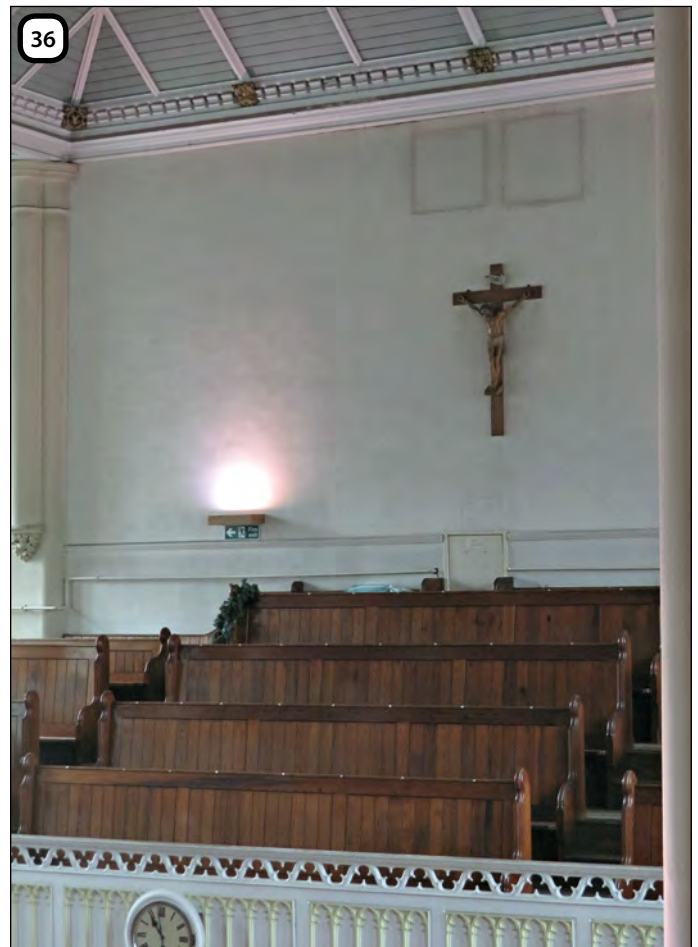
Work began in June 2014. Whitechapel Bell Foundry melted down the cracked tenor bell and cast five new bells. To make up our new eight, we acquired three bells from the redundant church of St. Mary's, Highfield Street, Liverpool, cast by John Taylor of Loughborough in 1952.

The bells were dedicated in December 2014 by Bishop Peter Hancock, the new Bishop of Bath and Wells, on his first visit to Christ Church. They were installed in the tower in January 2015 by Nicholson's of Bridport, and ringing was officially inaugurated on Sunday 22 February.

This page: 35: Looking up to the top of the bell tower before the refurbishment. 36: The west wall at gallery level. 37: The new bells.

Mears and Stainbank

The foundry known by this name from the 1860s until 1968, and since then as the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, has multiple claims to fame. The Guinness Book of Records recognises it as the oldest manufacturing company in Britain: it dates from at least 1570, and traces a lineage of master founders in the area back to 1420. The foundry cast several of the best-known bells in the world, including Big Ben (which is famously cracked) and the original American Liberty Bell (which also cracked the first time it was rung).





Around the grounds

Because Christ Church has never been a parish church, it has never had a graveyard. Instead, the church grounds have been put to more unusual uses. Just to the north-west of the church stands a pair of semi-detached dwellings called Christ Church Cottages (picture 38). These were designed by Thomas Fuller and built in 1856. Some observers have assumed (perhaps simply because they were built so close to the church itself?) that the cottages must have been designed as a presbytery or clerical residence, but this was never the intention: they were built to be let and provide additional income for the church. They have been renovated and modernised over the years with the addition of amenities such as bathrooms and indoor W.C.s, but they are essentially unchanged.

On the east side of the cottages, to the north of the church, is the former Christ Church Infants' School (picture 39), designed by Browne & Gill in 1894. It's believed that the ground floor was originally open-sided, thus providing a covered playground, but it's uncertain when the arcaded south side was enclosed. The kitchen annexe on the building's south side was added sometime after 1948. The school opened in October 1895 and served the area's children until it was absorbed into the nearby St. Andrew's School in 1976-77.

Sorry, the cottages and former school building are not open to visitors. Please respect the privacy of the tenants.



This page: 38: Christ Church Cottages. The Museum of Bath at Work (the former Real Tennis court) is behind. 39: The former Infants' School, now known as Christ Church Mews. 40: View from the church roof looking north-west over the Cottages towards the Museum. 41: Christ Church viewed from the north-west. The gable-roofed structure with a red door is the 1851 extension (see page 6). Note the quatrefoil window high up the north side of the tower – the last remaining such window in the building.

Thomas Fuller, architect

Thomas Fuller (1823-1898) had earlier designed the Town Hall in Bradford-on-Avon, St. John's Anglican Cathedral in Antigua, and Plymouth prison, among other projects. He was a native of Bath and had his practice in The Vineyards, just around the corner from Christ Church. Several drawings and designs for Christ Church by Fuller survive, dated in the mid 1850s, and he must have had a hand in various works on the building around that time, including the possible remodelling of the south elevation of the building. In 1857 he emigrated to Canada and in 1859 won the competition for the design of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa. He went on to have a distinguished career in North America.

The life of Christ Church

Christ Church is not just an interesting historic building, but a worshipping community. Today we are a liberal, open and inclusive church within the Church of England. Our main weekly service is a Sung Eucharist held at 10am on Sundays. This is a Common Worship Order 1 service with hymns, a psalm and a sung service setting led by our choir (except when they take their summer break in August). The musical standard is high, but it is important to us that membership of the choir is open to all without the need for audition.

We also offer a BCP Communion service at 8am on the second Sunday of each month, a glorious BCP Sung Evensong at 4:30pm on the third Sunday of the month, and a reflective service based on Iona liturgy at 5pm on the fourth Sunday.

Our congregation come from diverse backgrounds and from far afield, as well as from the local area. We strive to remain true to the spirit of inclusiveness that motivated the foundation of Christ Church, and welcome all people to participate in the liturgy and church community as fully as they feel able to. It is our custom to invite all communicant members of any Christian denomination to receive the bread and wine of the Eucharist. Children are welcomed at all our services, with the option of expertly supervised Junior Church activities during our main Sunday service.

For older members of our community and others who may not be able to attend services regularly, we hold a special quarterly service followed by afternoon tea. Over a long period we have had close connections with Bath's universities and we have a tradition of welcoming students, with a weekly evening social group for 18-30 year olds. Our long-established Pilgrim Group, a fortnightly study group, explores Biblical and theological themes and is open to all.

We cherish our historic links with the Caribbean community of Bath, partnering with them for a Windrush commemorative service in June and a CARICOM service later in the year.

At Christmas, in partnership with St. Stephen's, Lansdown, and Oasis Church, we offer an Inclusive Carol Service so that those who might not have felt comfortable in Anglican churches in the past because of gender or sexuality can be confident of their welcome.

We have a proud history of supporting inter-faith dialogue, and enjoy good relationships and occasional joint activities with our near neighbours at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, as well as the Bath Mosque and Oasis Church. Our outreach to the local community includes a weekly Community Café and providing support and volunteers for the weekly Food Pantry at Oasis Church.

This page: 42: Members of the congregation enjoy one of our occasional social events. 43: Christ Church has been licensed for weddings since 1887... 44: ...And baptisms since 1876.



We are an inclusive church.

We do not discriminate, on any level, on grounds of economic power, gender, mental health, age, family configuration, physical ability, race or sexuality. We seek to welcome and serve all people in the name of Jesus Christ; to proclaim the Gospel; and in the power of the Holy Spirit to enable all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of God.

You are welcome here.

Find out more

More information, service times and details of other events can be found at our website, www.christchurchbath.org.



Christ Church
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www.christchurchbath.org

This page: 45: Location map. 46: An unusual aerial view from the west, above Rivers Street (photo by Roger Beale).



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Acknowledgements

For helpful input and information, thanks are due to David Wrigley (former Organist of Christ Church), John Metcalfe (a former Churchwarden of long standing), Mark Elliott (Director of Music and a former chair of the Trustees of Christ Church), Matthew Jones, Ian Hay Davison, Margaret Heath, Canon Angela Townshend, Rev. Lore Chumbley, and the Bishop's Palace Trust Office in Wells. Useful historical background about the area has been drawn from *Northampton Street: an Outline of its Historical Development* by Trevor Fawcett, Francis Kelly and Peter Malone, 1999. Pictures 5, 6 and 7 are reproduced here by courtesy of Bath in Time (www.bathintime.co.uk), which aims to make freely accessible a comprehensive online archive of historic images of Bath (and also offers quality prints and cards of the images).

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