

Shrine History

The history begins after the crucifixion of Our Lord when it was reputed that Joseph of Arimathea a merchant travelled to Britain with the disciples of Jesus and built a wattle Church to the Mother of Jesus in the grounds of where the Abbey ruins are today.

During the Middle Ages the Chapel and Abbey were outstanding centres of pilgrimage and healing, including state visits by King Edward I, Edward III and Queen Phillipa who presented a silver and gold rosary to the statue.

The great annual pilgrimage was then on the 8 September, Our Lady's birthday.

In 1539 Henry VIII dissolved the Abbey and the seated statue and a standing statue of the Mother of Jesus was lost.

But not all was lost because nearly 400 years later in 1926 a small barn was converted into a Chapel. This Chapel was dedicated to Our Lady and stood across from the Abbey grounds. The land on which it stood was part of the Abbot's park of Wirral. In 1939 the foundations of a second Church were laid and this is where it stands today.

In July 1955 our standing statue from a representation of Our Lady on a 14th century metal seal from the Abbey and bearing the ancient title, Our Lady St Mary of Glastonbury was sculpted by Philip Lindsey-Clark F.R.B.S. It was blessed by the then Apostolic Delegate, the Most Rev. Gerald O'Hara and in the name of the Holy See the Shrine of Our Lady of Glastonbury was canonically restored.

Shrine History

In 1965 the statue was solemnly crowned by the then Apostolic Delegate the Most Rev. Igino Cardinale in the presence of the Anglican Bishop of Bath & Wells. It was an historic moment, and the influence of Our Lady drawing all Christians to worship her Son.

(The privilege of crowning statues is reserved to the Chapter of St Peter's in Rome, who appoints a delegate and prescribes the ceremonial, re-affirming the restoration of the Ancient Shrine.)

The ladies of the Church donated jewellery to make the crown and it is one of the very few crowned statues in England.

The Tapestry

The tapestry was designed by Brother Louis Barlow of the Benedictine Abbey at Prinknash in Gloucestershire. It was woven by the Edinburgh Tapestry Co Ltd. in 1965. 5 weavers took 240 working hours to complete the tapestry. It was woven by hand on an upright loom. The looms were in use in Soho in the 17 Century. The weft is wool on a cotton warp. The technique is Gobelin weave. (Gobelin stitch takes its name from its resemblance to the texture of woven tapestries produced by the famous French factory at Gobelins)

Blessed Richard Whiting the last Abbot of Glastonbury is shown with Roger James the Sacristan and John Thorne the Treasurer who were all martyred in 1539. (*see separate card for all people depicted on the tapestry*)

The Stained Glass Window

The stained glass window was donated by Mrs Mostyn in memory of her husband Charles who died in 1935. Their Coat of Arms is shown in the window pane with Blessed Abbot Whiting.

In the centre section at the base depicts the signing of many of the Privileges and Grants to the Church given by King Ina the Anglo Saxon King of Wessex in AD 704. He is pictured here with St Aldhelm Abbot of Malmesbury and the Abbot of Glastonbury.

The window in the side Chapel showing a seated Mother of God was in memory of the late Miss D'Abreu a former convent border.

The window in the Sacred Heart Chapel was donated by Mr Gilmer a jeweller from Bath.

Petition Book

The Shrine Petition Book was introduced in 2000 when Father Kevin Knox-Lecky was Priest. He stressed that the Shrine of Our Lady of Glastonbury may be a place of healing and serenity and all those who visit here be led to Jesus.

You can insert your prayer via the internet or give in by hand to be read out at our Healing Masses.



The Shrine of Our Lady
Magdalene Street, Glastonbury, BA6 9EJ
Parish Office: 01458 835931
Website: www.glastonburyshrine.co.uk
Ed. 28.07.25

The Great Fire & Miracles 1184 & 1332/33

On 25 May 1184 there was a Great Fire in the Abbey and both Abbey and the Church were destroyed. The Miracles were documented by William of Malmesbury and John of Glastonbury as follows:

William of Malmesbury – *De Antiquitate Glastonie Ecclesie*. “Also to be found there (the Lady Chapel) is an image of the Blessed Mary which was not touched – not even the veil that hung from its head – by the great fire that surrounded the altar and consumed the cloth and all the ornaments on it. Yet because of the fire’s heat blisters, like those on a living man, arose on its face and remained visible for a long time to all who looked, testifying to a divine miracle”.

John of Glastonbury – *Cronica sive Antiquates Glastoniensis Ecclesie* (during Adam of Sodbury’s Abbey: 1323 to 1334) “Once, while the convent of Glastonbury was chanting the Antiphon Salve Regina in devotion to God and Blessed Mary, the glorious Virgin’s standing statue which stood at altar moved like a living lady. While a whole crowd of secular people looked on, and while the monks watched as well, she clapped for the child she held on her lap, now putting her hand to his face, now drawing it back in reverence; nor did she cease these movements until the choir had haltingly sung through the whole antiphon. Christ brought about these and many other great events, in honour of his name and of his most Beloved Mother, in order that their names might be devoutly commemorated there forever”.

KAROUSSOS ICONS

On 5 September 2018 three icons depicting the Virgin Mary, Christ the Life Giver and St John the Theologian and Prochorus were received here at the Shrine. Katerina Karoussos brought them from Greece – she is the custodian of the Karoussos Foundation. Her Father Iannis Karoussos a famous Iconographer painted these icons. He was commissioned by Pope John Paul II to paint the frescos in St Theodoro in Palatino in Rome.

Nigelle De Visme a parishioner had a revelation whilst sitting in a cave on the Island of Patmos where St John had his revelations. She felt that the Holy place of Patmos and the Holy place of Glastonbury were linked and felt that both places should be twinned.

On hearing that the Island of Patmos was twinned with Glastonbury Katerina visited Glastonbury to offer three of his award winning icons to the Shrine in honour of her father and his vision of unity.

The Glastonbury Chair

The original chair was brought back from Rome in 1504 by Abbot Richard Beere and was produced for John Arthur Thorne the monk and treasurer of the Abbey. He being the “Monachus Johannes” to whom reference is made in the chair’s carved inscription. Copies of the chair can be seen in churches all over the world. There is one in the Bishop’s Palace in Wells. Our original Glastonbury chair has now gone but we have a copy.

THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY GLASTONBURY



SHRINE HISTORY

Possibly the most ancient Marian Shrine in the UK.

The restored Shrine dedicated to Our Lady, is the successor to the ancient Shrine of Our Lady of Glastonbury which was built before AD658 and was known as the “Old Church of the most Blessed Virgin” and described as the “foremost Church in Britain, the fount and source of all religion”.