

# **THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS**



## **Malvern College Tour**

**9th April 2024**

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## **MALVERN COLLEGE WALK** by James Fletcher

We start at the corner of Priory Road and College Road.

It is thought that College Road was once named Radnor Road, and became College Road when the School opened in 1865.

We start our visit at:

### **St Edmund's Hall**



Designed by Peter Paul Pugin, of Pugin & Pugin, it was built as a Roman Catholic church, Our Lady & St Edmund, in 1904-5.



Peter Paul Pugin was the son of Augustus Welby Pugin, and the half-brother of Edward Welby Pugin, with whom he carried on A W Pugin's practice. It was the last commission of Peter Paul, and he died before it was completed.

Edward Welby Pugin built the predecessor of the current Church of St Mary the Virgin in Madresfield, and the current church incorporates E W Pugin's roof.

Our Lady & St Edmund was built at a cost of £7,000. The outside is faced with Cradley stone, as with many Malvern buildings. The windows are of bath stone and the roof is of Tilberthwaite green slates.

The church closed in 1996 and was transferred to the College, which now uses it as a concert hall and for other functions.

Note the set of carved stone Stations of the Cross. These were erected by different parishioners, the last five being in memory of Miss E O'Connor.

The stained glass is all by Hardman, from 1907-11. The largest window shows St Christopher, and Jesus showing the wound in his side to "Doubting" Thomas.

Then through the link into:



### **Music School (formerly Townshend House)**

This was built c. 1850 and it was here that Dr Ralph Barnes Grindrod (1811-83) practised "The Water Cure".

About 1861-2 the house was extended by Edward C Allflett, Architect and Surveyor, (1832-1890) of Leigh in Worcestershire.

The impressive tiles in the hallways are by Godwins of Lugwardine.

Between 1888 and 1890 the building was briefly occupied by a boys' prep school run by Rev William Walker, named Connellan College after his wife's Irish ancestors. The name 'CONNELLAN' can still just be made out near the top of the left hand gatepost.

About 1891 it became a small Roman Catholic monastery, which was associated with St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School in Newtown Road.

When the monastery moved in 1918, Townshend House was acquired by Malvern College.

The inscription 'ELLERSLIE' has been added to the gatepost, circa 2010, relating to the move of Ellerslie School in Abbey Road to Malvern College.

On the front of the house can be seen a green plaque, placed by Malvern Civic Society. The inscription on the plaque reads *“Formerly Townshend House, where Dr Ralph Grindrod practised the Water Cure (1851-1880)”*



Not now a College building, but **Radnor Lodge**, opposite, was previously owned by the College. It is Tudor Gothic with fancy pierced barge-boards.

The castellated building up on the right behind those in College Road, is **Elmsdale**, 53 Abbey Road. This was another water cure establishment, built in 1853 to a design by architect Samuel Sanders Teulon. The stepped gables are particularly distinctive.

Across the road is a single story 'Tudor' building, also by Teulon from 1851, with tall chimneys, named **Royds Lodge**. This was formerly the Bath House of the Hardwick House and Elmsdale water cure establishments higher up the hill in Abbey Road. Royds Lodge is now largely hidden behind shrubbery.

Note that most of the walls of the houses in College Road are of Malvern stone.

Walking further along College Road we arrive on the left at:



## Boarding House No. 9 (formerly Roslin House)



This is a large Italianate lodging house. It was extended around 1903 to become a boarding house. Note the quoins and timber lean-to porch on very large brackets.

A blue plaque on the house reads *"In this house and college during World War II Dr A.P. Rowe CBE, Physicist, led British radar research."*

During the Second World War, many military units were based in Malvern. One of these was the secret RAF Telecommunications Research Establishment (TRE) which moved to Malvern in 1942, taking over Malvern College. Staff were billeted out in the town.

Albert Percival Rowe was the Chief Superintendent of TRE. After the war he moved to Australia, but later returned to Malvern where he died in 1976.

The next building on the left is:

### **School House**

In 1865 this was the Headmaster's house, and designed by C F Hansom. It was enlarged as a boarding house c.1876 by Haddon Bros, who were Hereford architects.

We then get a full view of the whole:





**College main building (from College Road)**

The College opened in January 1865. The first headmaster was Reverend Arthur Faber, and there were six assistant masters and 24 boys.



The building was designed by C. F. Hansom, who had modified for the slope a design originally submitted for Clifton College.

It is built of local Cradley stone with banded slate roofs. This elevation, and the courtyard behind which we will see later, are both symmetrical.

In 1939 the premises were compulsorily requisitioned, and the College was evacuated to Blenheim Palace. In the event, only three Houses were occupied: No.5 by the Free French cadets, No.1 by W.R.N.S. and No.2 as an R.A.F. mess, so the College returned late in 1940.

It was forced out again, however, to make way for the Telecommunications Research Establishment, the developer of radar, and despite the threat of bombing, the School was accommodated in empty boarding houses at Harrow School, where it remained until 1946.

Next on the left we see:

### **The Porter's Lodge**



Contemporary with the College, this is still the home and base of the School porter.



Since 1869 there have only been 7 porters.

And up ahead before we turn into the gate:

### **Boarding House No. 8**



Built as Radnor House in 1867, it was altered c.1882 by the owner's cousin, the architect Edmund Wallace Elmslie, who designed Great Malvern Railway Station and the Imperial Hotel (now Malvern St James School).

On the death of the owner, Radnor House was acquired by Malvern College and much enlarged by Henman and Cooper about 1907 to become a College boarding house.

Turning left into the gate, we get another view of the Porter's Lodge, then further on the left:

### **The Chapel**

*(we will go inside later on)*

This was built in 1899 by Sir Arthur W Blomfield, and 9 years later was enlarged with an aisle on the south side by C J Blomfield, Arthur's son.

It is of Milton-under-Wychwood stone.



And then on the right:

### **The Memorial Library**

*(we will return for refreshments in here later)*



Built in 1924, the building commemorates the 457 Malvernians who died in the Great War. It was designed by Maurice Webb, of Sir Aston Webb & Son (Maurice was the Son in the name of the practice).

It is built of Leckhampton ashlar.

Continuing down the hill, we see three more boarding houses on our right:



**Boarding House No. 3**



**Boarding House No. 4**





Both houses were designed by W J Hopkins. No. 3 in 1866 and No. 4 added in 1868.

W J Hopkins was the Diocesan architect for Worcester.

and **Boarding House No. 6**



Built in 1871 by Haddon Bros., this was originally House No. 5. The Housemasters of Nos. 5 and 6 swapped over due to the size of their families, and took their house numbers with them.

The house was gutted by fire in 2010, and the replacement roof can clearly be seen.

Turning the corner to the right we see the

### **Ron Hughes Rackets Courts**

Built by Henman and Cooper, 1904-5, with parts from 1881.





To the left is:

### **South Lodge**



And to the left of that is the Rogers Theatre (page 12). This was originally the gymnasium. It and South Lodge are also by Henman & Cooper, and built in 1876 when the School outgrew the original gymnasium in the main building. It was converted to the Rogers Theatre in 1984.



## The Rogers Theatre



We then make our way past the Senior Turf (the upper cricket pitch)

In front of us to the right can be seen:

### The Grub



Designed by Howard Robertson in 1927, during its lifetime it has been used as the Lower School common room, a dining room, tuck shop, uniform shop, match tea space and even more recently a COVID-19 test centre. It is currently undergoing refurbishment, to include a café and co-working spaces.



To the right of that we see:

### **Boarding House No. 5**



Built in 1894, by Nevinson & Newton, this was originally House No. 6. As mentioned previously, the Housemasters of Nos. 5 and 6 swapped over due to the size of their families, and took their house numbers with them.

Further in the distance can be seen the spire of **Christ Church**, built in 1876 in memory of Rev. George Fisk, a former Malvern vicar. The well-established Liverpool architects, T D Barry & Sons, were employed to design a large and lavishly detailed Church with a lofty spire which figures prominently in the Malvern skyline.

We arrive at:

### **The Pavilion**



This was built in 1876-7 by Haddon Bros, and expanded as a cricket pavilion by Charles A. Edge in 1894. The building originally included a Science laboratory.

Worcestershire County Cricket Club was nicknamed “Fostershire” in the early 20th Century, as seven brothers from the Foster family played for the club. All of the brothers were educated at the College.

Entering the pavilion, we turn right into

### **The Long Room**

This contains trophies, photos and honours boards of all past glories of College teams over the years.

Exiting and continuing up the hill towards the main building, we come to:





## St George's Terrace and statue



The war memorial was by Sir Aston Webb and Son in 1922, and the bronze statue of St George was by Alfred Drury. Along with the Memorial Library, they commemorate those having lost their lives in the First World War.

Entering the main building, we take the corridor and the stairs up to:

### Former Sixth Form Room

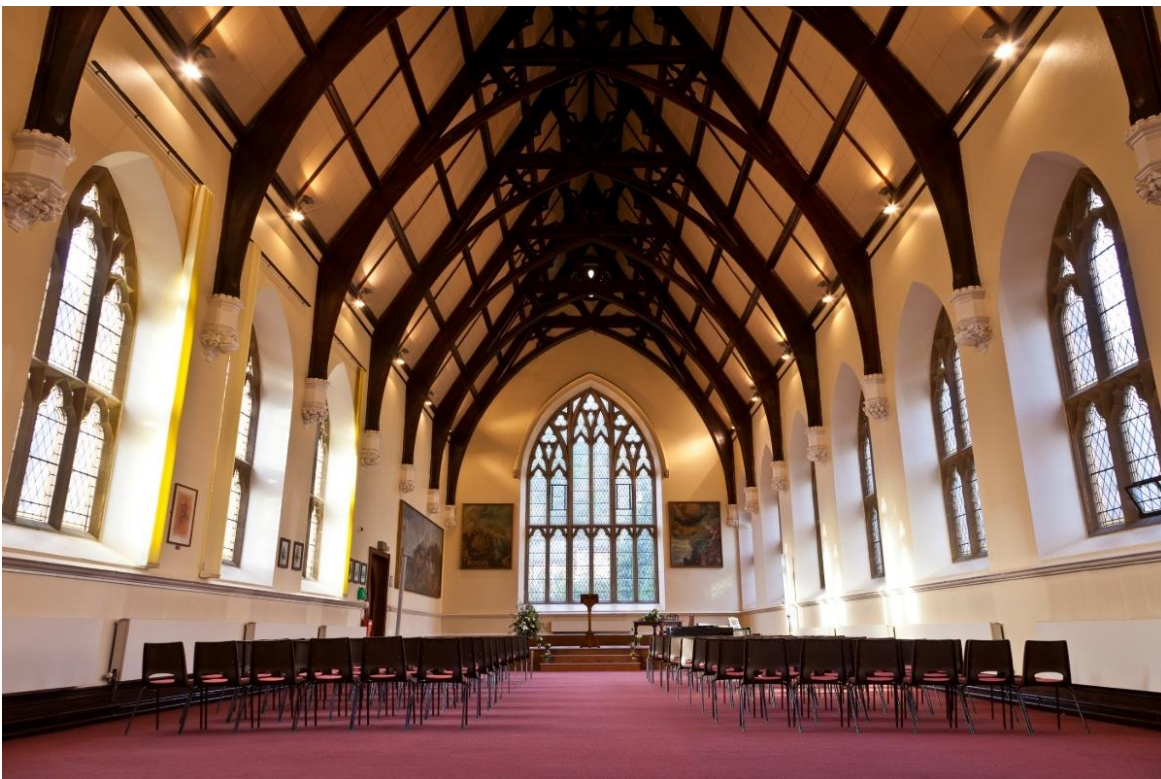


As well as Big School, this was used by the TRE during the Second World War, and had promised not to turn this room into a laboratory.

It was the chief superintendent's office (Albert Rowe, whose blue plaque is on House 9), but also the scene of the famous 'Sunday Soviets' – meetings of scientists, university dons, civil servants, service officers, and occasionally cabinet ministers, at which matters of policy and priority were discussed.

Returning to the ground floor and to the other end of the main corridor, we ascend the stairs to:

## Big School



With a capacity of 400, the acoustics in Big School are excellent, and it is used for large conferences, receptions, plays, concerts and exhibitions.

The sliding doors which can be used to partition off the space, are thought to be original.

The frescoes are by G F Watts, and are part of a cycle of nine separate murals, each an allegorical representation of the material world: earth, water, wind, fire and air. They became collectively known as "The Elements". They were painted in the 1850s for the third Earl Somers as a decorative scheme for his dining room at Carlton House Terrace, London. After spending time at Eastnor Castle (which is owned by relatives of the Somers family), they were loaned to the College by the Crown Estate in 1991.

Going back down to the ground floor and out of the south door, we cross and enter:



## The Chapel interior



It has a tie- and collar-beam roof.

The stone reredos is by Reginald Blomfield, c. 1910.

There are war memorials from 1922 (simply set into the oak panelling north of the sanctuary) and 1950 (in the ante-chapel, by PW Hubbard, carved by H H Martyn). This one is of Portland stone, with Hopton Wood stone panels – Hopton Wood stone coming from Middleton-by-Wirksworth, in Derbyshire, and described as England's finest stone, due to its marble like quality. It is used extensively on the floors of Chatsworth House.

The beautiful stained glass windows are as follows – starting from the north-west (all are *Kempe & Co*, unless stated otherwise):-

- The Advent window (1914)
- The Nativity or Christmas window (1935, *Comper*)
- The Epiphany window (1921)
- The Lent window (1936, *Burlison & Grylls*)
- The Holy Week window (1903)
- The Easter window (1902)
- The Emmaus (Sunday after Easter) window (1903)
- The Ascension Day window (1903)
- The Whit Sunday window (1906)
- The Trinity window (1908)
- The All Saints window (1909)

Kempe signed his work with a wheatsheaf. His nephew, Walter Tower, who took over the studio, added a white tower to the wheatsheaf. Both signs can be seen in the Chapel.

In the south aisle, the two south-east window pairs are also by Kempe and from 1903-4. The rest are by Clayton & Bell from 1875, and were from the temporary chapel that was originally in the main building's wing.

Exiting on the south side, we cross to:

### **The Memorial Library interior**



Note the stone figures of the zodiac. The stone carving is by Walter Gilbert; woodwork by Robert Bridgeman & Sons of Lichfield, who also worked on St Bartholomew's, Wednesbury.

*We now enjoy well-earned refreshments.*

*With thanks to Tim Bridges and Stephen Hartland for their help in preparing this guide.*

*James Fletcher  
April 2024*