



St Mark's Gillingham – 160th Anniversary



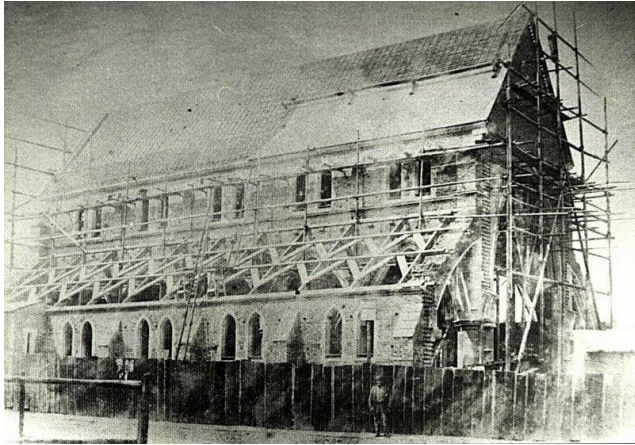
St. Mark's Gillingham

April 2026



Past, Present and Future

Past History, Present Opportunities, Future Hopes



Parish population 15,790



What was happening in 1866

Queen Victoria was on the throne

HG Wells and Beatrix Potter were born.

The Royal Navy was the most powerful in the world, prompting the expansion of Chatham Dockyard.

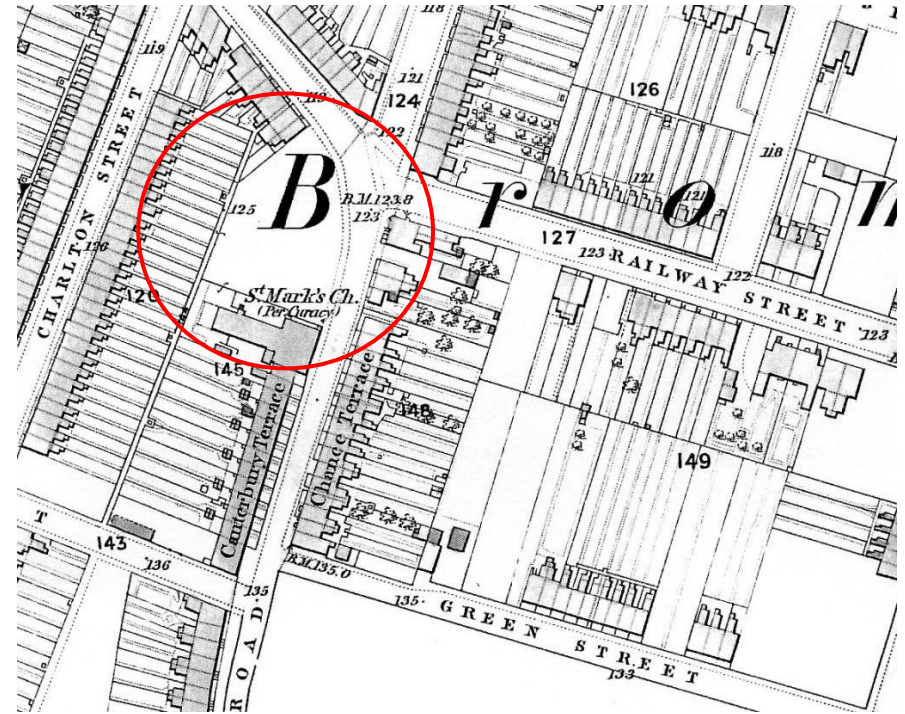




New Brompton was built to serve the Dockyard. As it expanded the need for labourers grew and more houses were built.



Dockyard Main Gate



St Mark's Church site before the church was built surrounded by terraced houses for dockyard workers.



With no church representation in the New Brompton area, some leading citizens held a series of meetings in the Monarch Public House.

They lobbied for a clergyman and a curate was allocated by Gillingham Parish Church.

Services started at the Institute in Britton Street in August 1857.



**Monarch Public House
Arden Street**

**'First' St Mark's congregation.
Pub closed in 2010.
Building remains today.**



St Mark's Vicars – The first 100 years

		Tenure
Alfred Willis	1862 - 1872	10
Richard Morris	1872 - 1917	45
Harry Hamilton-Taylor	1918 - 1933	15
Levi Howland	1934 - 1948	14
James Dawson-Bowling	1948 - 1952	4
Frederick Gadd	1952 - 1957	5

At 45 years, Richard Morris was the longest serving incumbent



St Mark's Vicars – The last 60 Years

		Tenure
John Collins	1957 - 1971	14
James Tabern	1972 - 1979	7
Thomas Collett-White	1979 - 1990	11
Colin Buchanan	1991 - 1996	5
John Saunders	1997 - 2008	11
Peter Guinness	2010 - 2014	5
Saju Muthalaly	2015 - 2022	7
Catharina Olsson Gisleskog	2022 -	



In December 1861, Alfred Willis was appointed as the first vicar of St Mark's.

Although of Anglo Catholic tradition he had evangelistic zeal to proclaim the good news of Christ.

In May 1862 a wooden building was opened as a school and temporary church.



The Rev Alfred Willis



St Mark's site was purchased for £237 and building work commenced in 1864 at an estimated cost of £8,000 including the tower and spire.

The Foundation stone was laid by the Lord Lieutenant of Kent on the 4th October 1864.

To the Glory of our Lord Jesus and in memory of St Mark, the Evangelist.

“ In the Faith of Jesus Christ, we lay the Foundation Stone, In the Name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, Amen”.

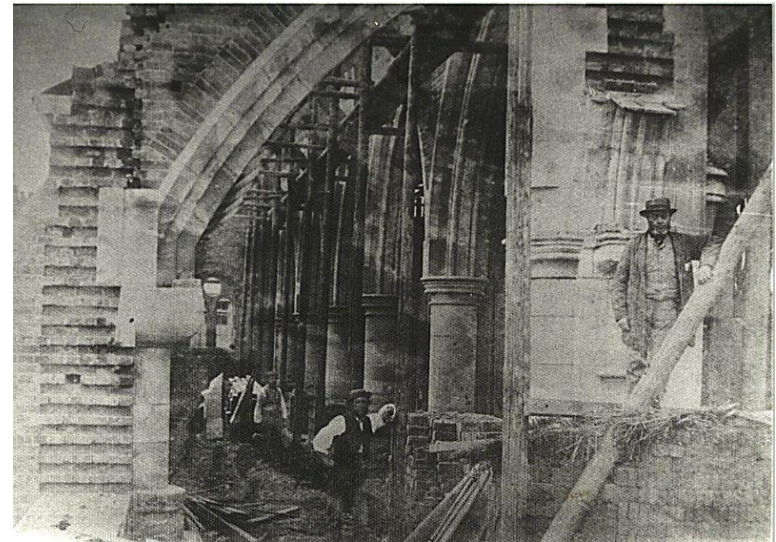
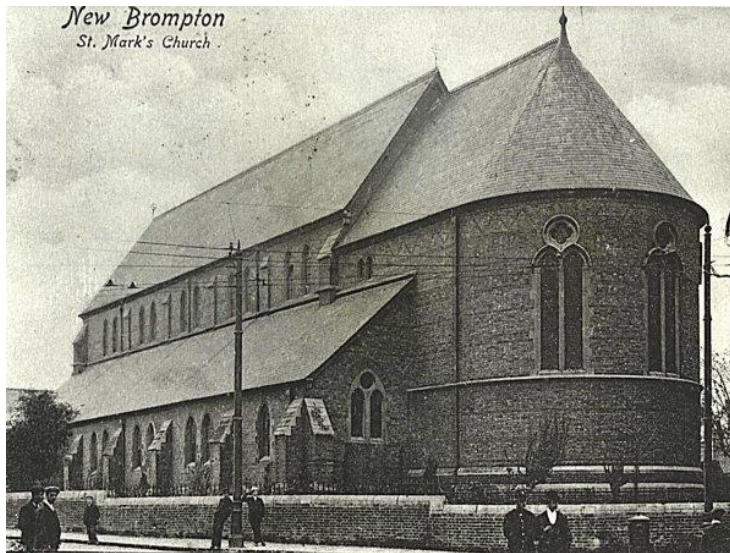
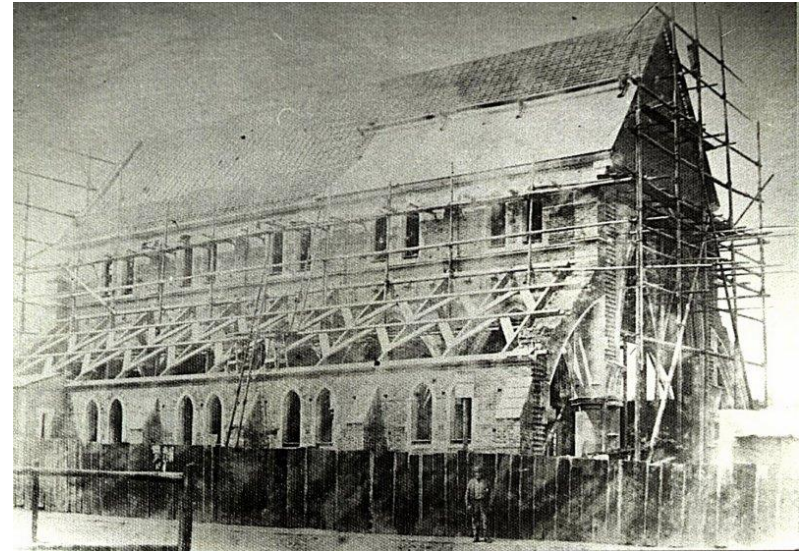


Under Construction

1864 - 1866

St Mark's was built by James Wilkins and Son. The architect was Mr Saint Aubyn.

The final cost was £5,800.





Consecration – 24 April 1866

CONSECRATION

OF
Church of
NEW BROMPTON,
DIOCESE OF
ARCHDEACON,
ON TUESDAY,



THE
S. Mark,
KENT,
ROCHESTER:
J. P. St. AUBYN, Esq.,
APRIL 24, 1866.

800 SITTINGS, ALL FREE AND UNAPPROPRIATED.



Consecration – 24 April 1866

With feelings of deepest gratitude to Almighty God, who has put it into the hearts of His servants to contribute bountifully for the extension of the Kingdom of His Dear Son, the announcement is made that the Church of S. Mark, New Brompton, is now finished saving the Tower and Spire, and will (D.V) be consecrated

**on Tuesday, April 24th 1866 , the Eve
of S. Mark.**

At 11.30 a.m.

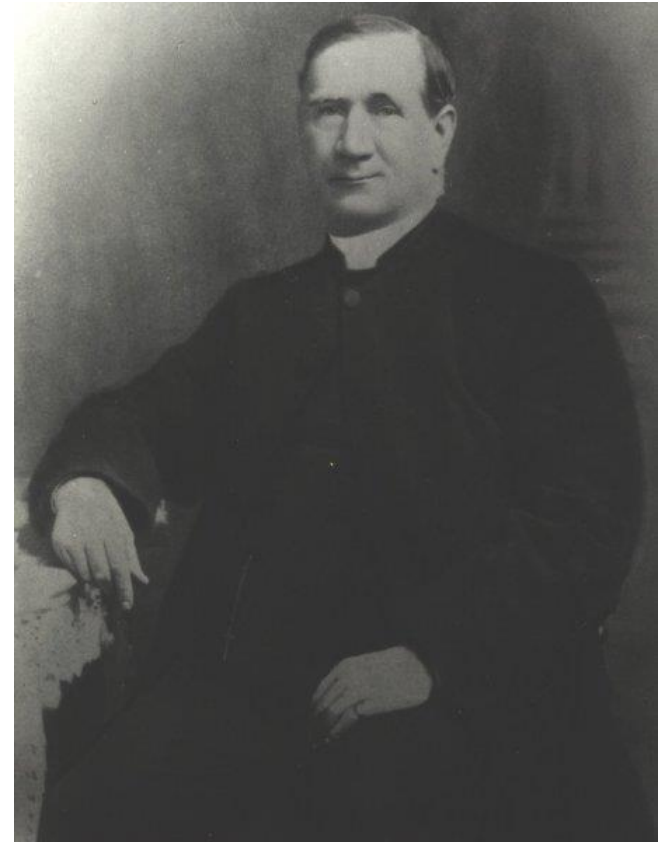




The late 1800s

Richard Morris was St Mark's longest serving Vicar from 1872 to 1917 - 1917 – a total of 45 years. He was 76 years old when he announced his resignation and had not had a holiday for four years.

He was awarded Freedom of the Borough by Gillingham Town Council



**Richard Morris
Longest serving Vicar
1872 - 1917**



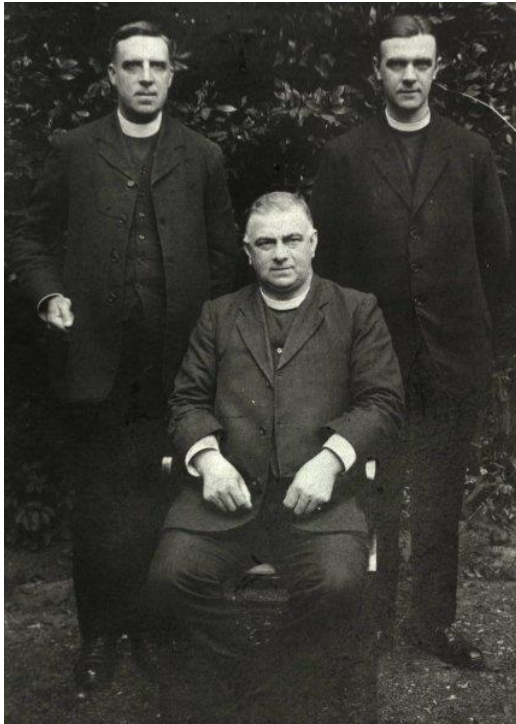
A new St Mark's School was built in 1871. In latter years it was used as a Church Hall. A number of well known Christian bands performed there in the early 1970s.

Because of a deteriorating condition, it was demolished in 1975.

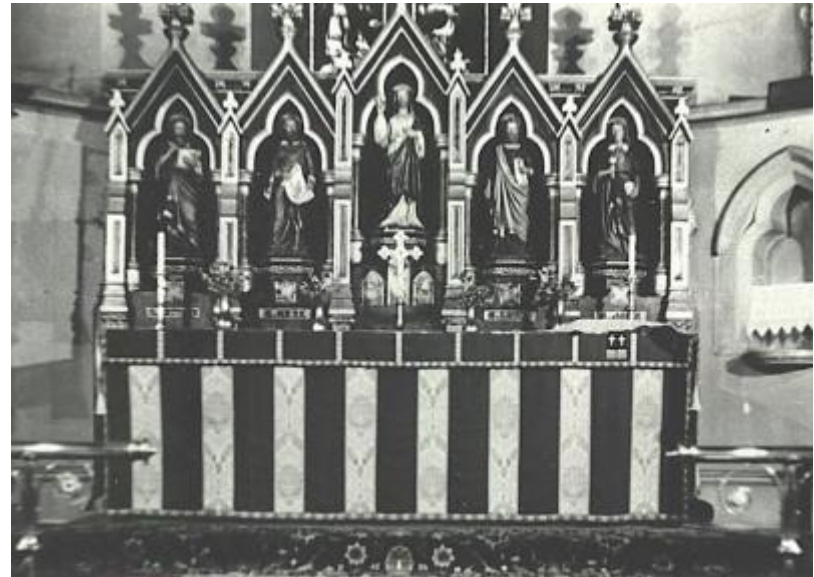




The early 1900s



Harry Hamilton-Taylor
Vicar 1918 – 1933
(centre) with his two
curates





1940s



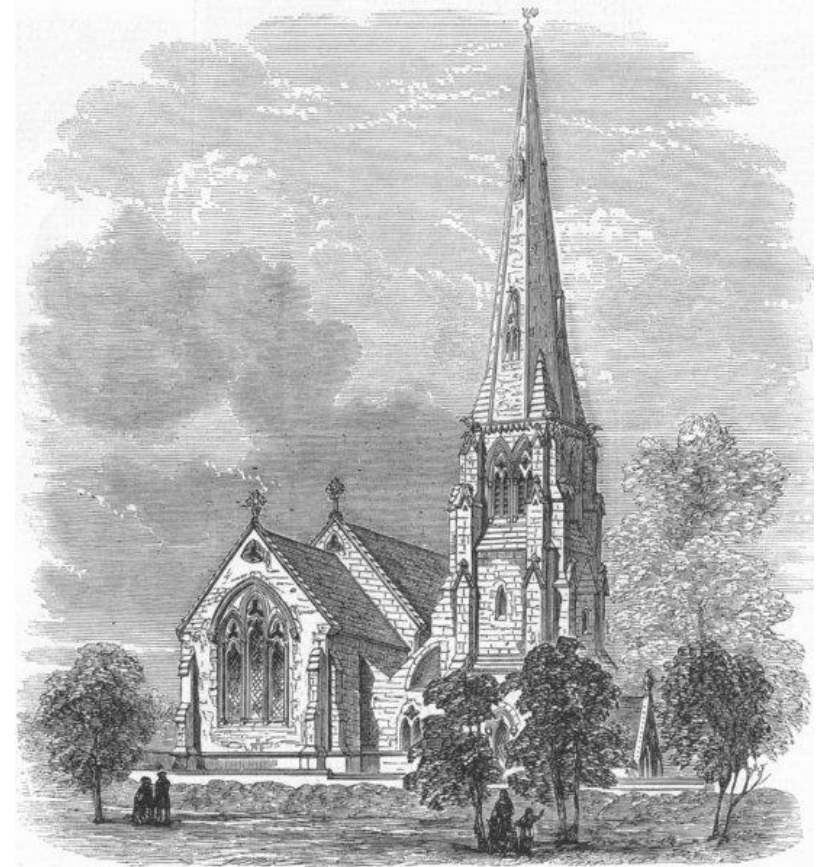
Wedding in 1948. Note the slate church roof.



James Dawson-Bowling
Vicar 1948 to 1952



The church of Holy Trinity Old Brompton, which was consecrated in 1849 and seated over a thousand, was closed in 1950 and the parish amalgamated with St Mark's in 1955. Holy Trinity was later demolished. The last vicar was Canon Selwyn Gummer, the father of Lord John Gummer.

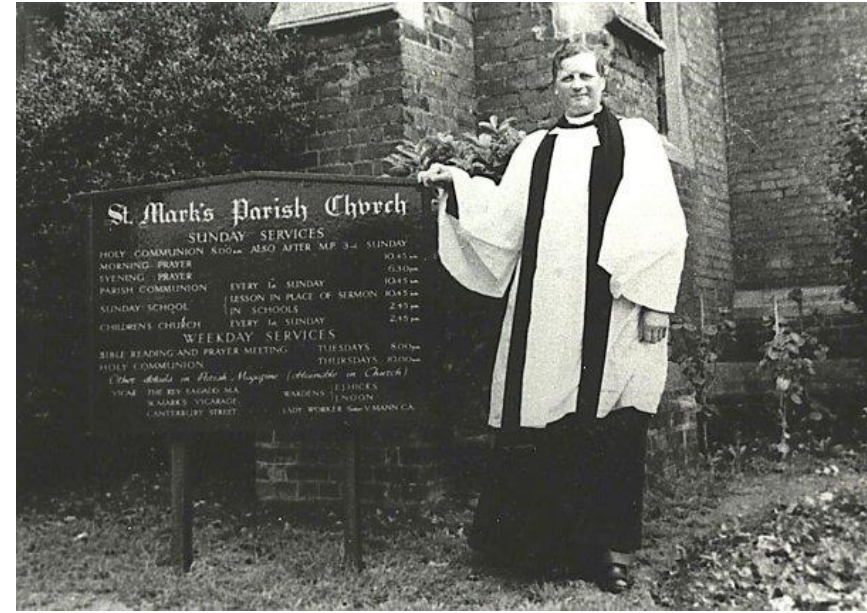




The 1950s



Children's Church taken at Harvest 1954. The vicar is Derek Gadd and his daughter Jenny Collett-White is in the photo.



Fredereck Gadd
Vicar 1952 to 1957



Some of the many blessings in the 1960s

- **Regular Guest Services**
- **Family Services started**
- **Visit of Corrie ten Boom**
- **Simeon's Hostel opened**
- **Holy Spirit fell in an extraordinary way**
- **Electoral Roll exceeds 500**
- **Evangelistic Mission to Normanton**
- **Pastoral Elders appointed**
- **Church roof replaced**





In 1962, Simeon's Hostel for Ordinands opened in Balmoral Road and ran for eight years.

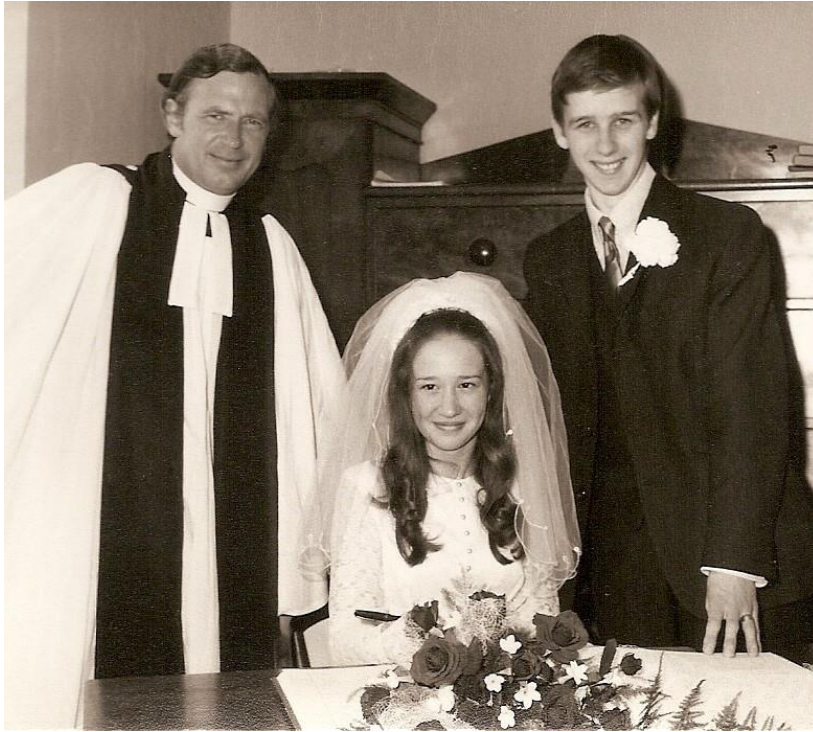
Over that time around 25 men lived and worked in the parish in preparation for full time ministry.

Three of the ordinands – John Freeth, John Saunders and Graham Cray subsequently joined St Mark's as clergy.



Simeon's Housemother Mrs MacDonald second from left.

Standing is a young Ernie Mann.

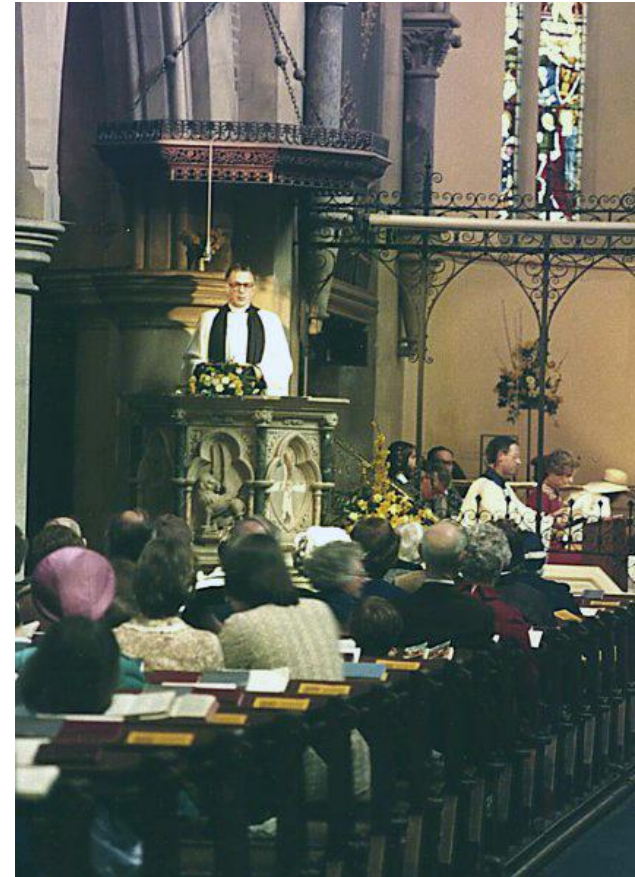


Glyn and Vicky Allen joined St Mark's in 1967 and were married in 1970 along with 25 other couples that year. Pictured with vicar John Collins.



The 1970s

John Collins leaves St Mark's after 14 years and James Tabern appointed as the new Vicar.



Jim Tabern preaching from the pulpit

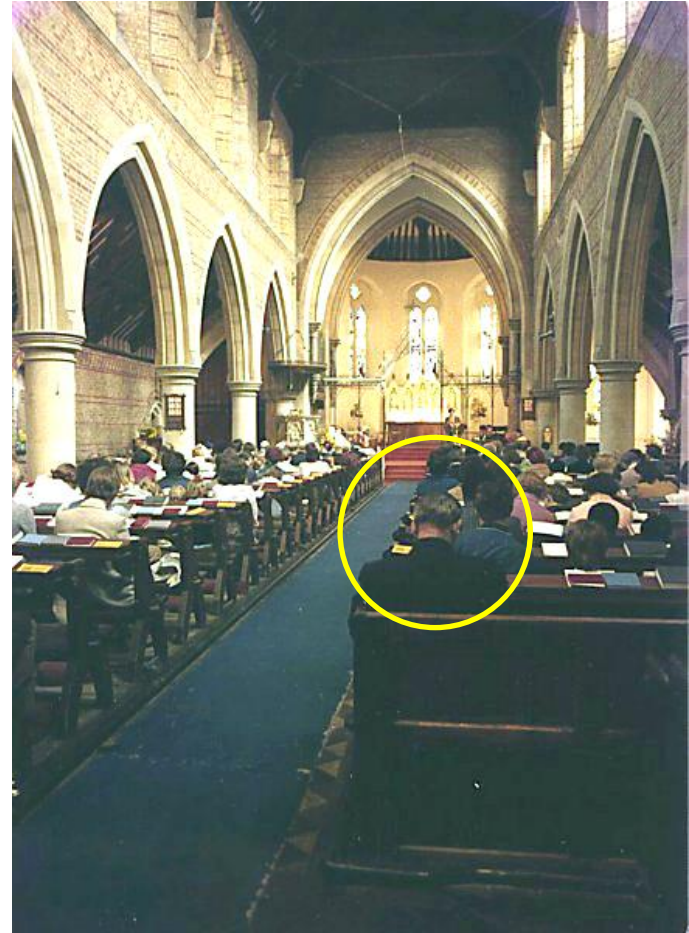


The 1970s

St Mark's in the late 70s.

The man circled is Bill Goodwin, who was caretaker for many years. He was quite a character and was the rodent officer for Gillingham.

Note the heating system – large pipes running along the centre aisle and blue carpet.





Family Houseparty 1980s

Family House parties were common in the 1980s, being held at Ashburnham Place in Sussex, attended by over 200 members of the congregation.



Above one of the activities called ' Hunt the Spy', with a few familiar faces.



Back at Ashburnham

After 42 years a return to Ashburnham in 2026



A few changes but still a great place for teaching, fun and fellowship.



The Shrove Tuesday Party was held for many years when the St Mark's staff would entertain the congregation in the Vicarage Hall.



Included above is vicar Thomas-Collett White, curate Jeremy Crossley and Pastoral Assistant Bill Bradford.



Major re-ordering of the church took place in 1984, including removal of the pews and erection of the dias. No services were cancelled even in the winter months

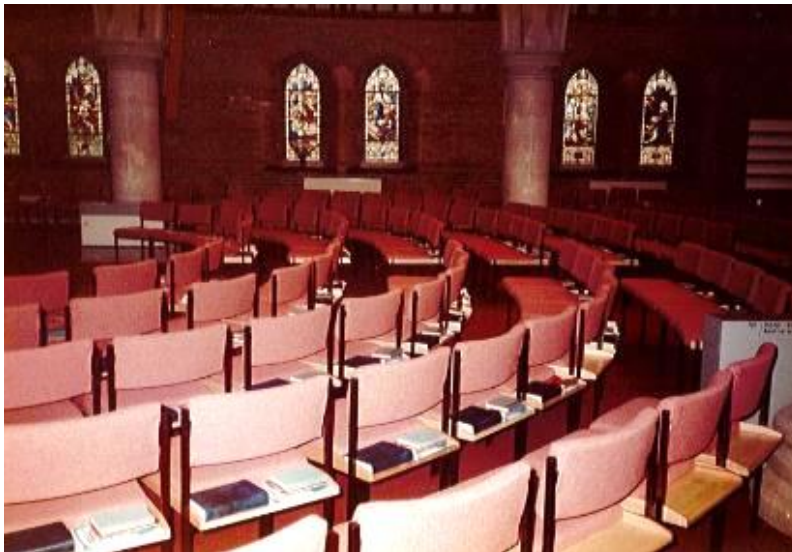


Full morning and evening services while work was being carried out.



Church re-ordering

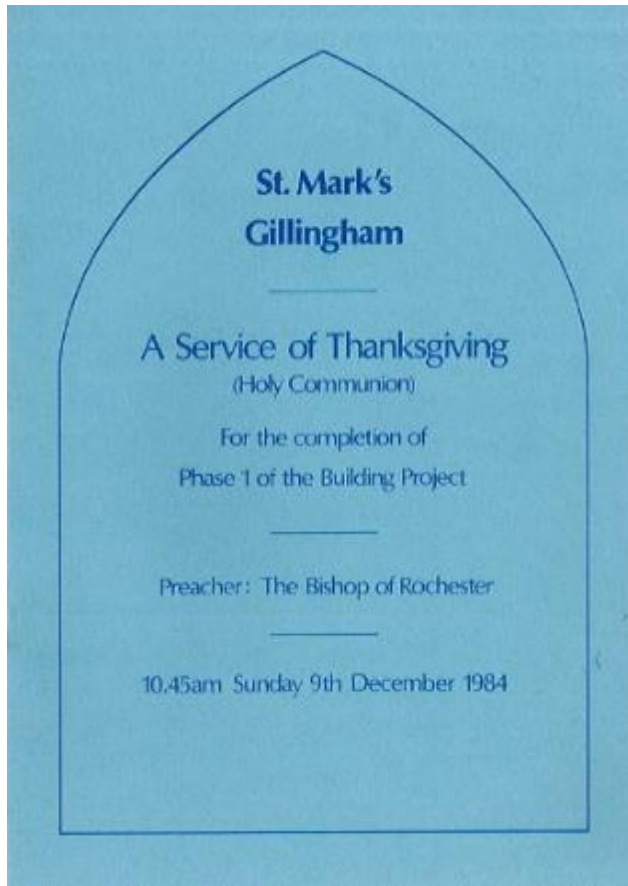
1984





Church re-ordering

1984



Thanksgiving Service with
the Bishop of Rochester



First Baptism by Immersion

1985



The first baptism by immersion in the installed baptistery



And today



First televised service

1985

The first televised service from St Mark's was broadcast live by TVS on 1st December 1985. It was viewed by millions. The evangelist Daniel Cozens preached.



ST. MARK'S
GILLINGHAM

'AT THE
CROSSROADS'

Sunday 1st December at 10am

TELEVISED MORNING SERVICE

Speaker : Daniel Cozens

IMPORTANT
SEATS MUST BE TAKEN BY 9.15 AM

TICKET
NO. 181





Coffee Shop

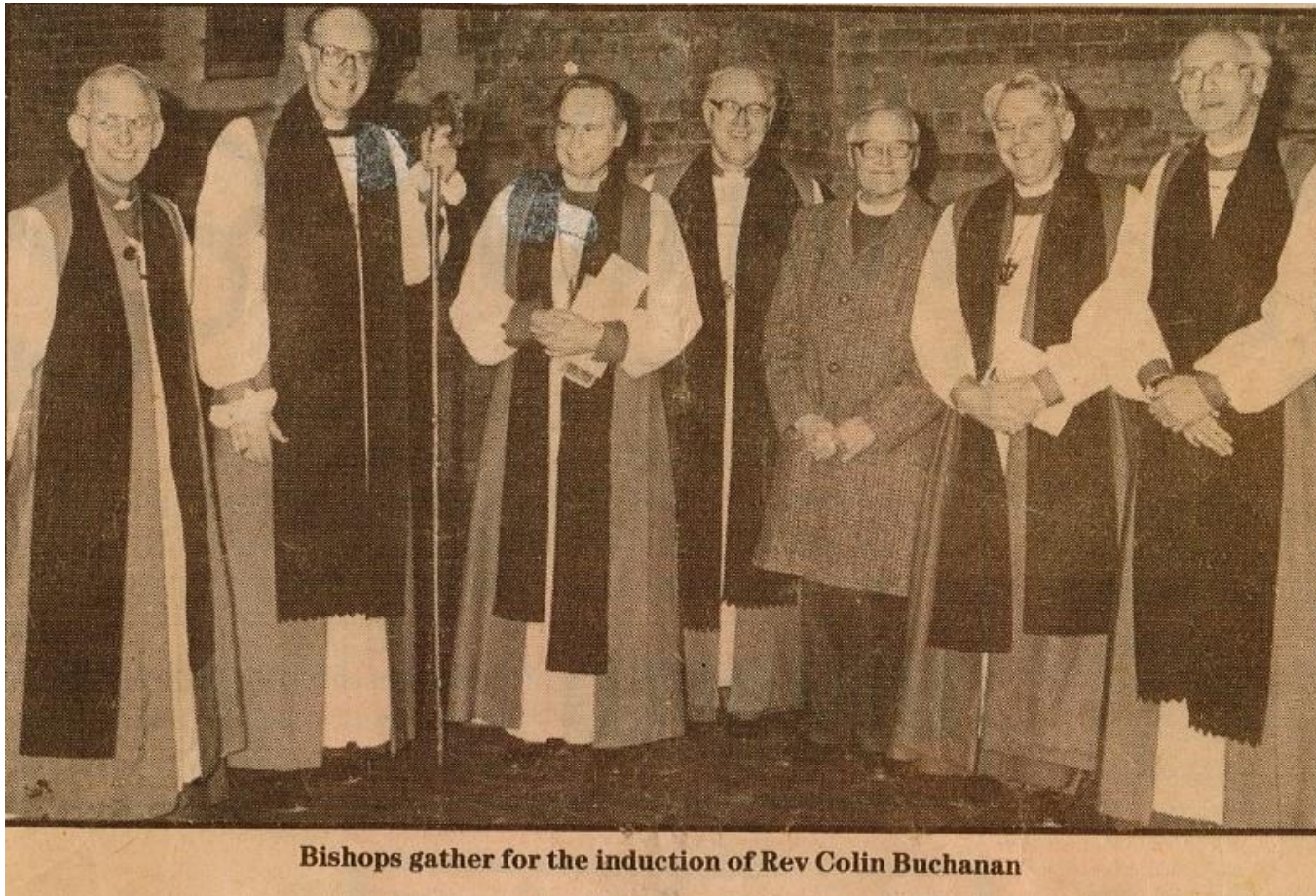
1989

St Mark's Coffee Shop started in 1989 and ran for 26 years





Institution of Bishop Colin Buchanan in 1991 as vicar of St Mark's with the Archbishop of Canterbury designate Bishop George Carey



Bishops gather for the induction of Rev Colin Buchanan



The 1990s



Above boat trip to celebrate Colin Buchanan's 60th birthday





Parish Boundaries

St Mark's parish boundaries have changed a number of times over the years.

At the end of the 1880s when St Barnabas came into being and St Luke's in 1909.

The last change was in 1999 with the planting of St Mary's Island Church

Gillingham St Mark

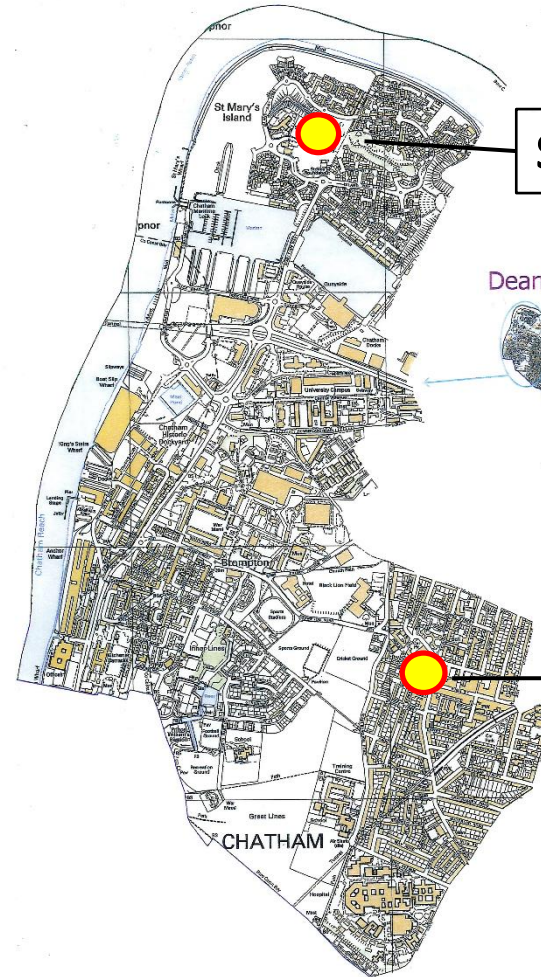


Diocese of
Rochester

SMI Church

Deanery of Gillingham

St Mark's



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St Mary's Island Church started in January 2000 and became a Local Ecumenical Partnership in 2003. It is now fully Anglican under the auspices of St Mark's, with it's own District Council.





Into the 21st Century



John Saunders - Vicar
1997 to 2008





St Mark's in the 21st Century





St Mark's in the Mission Field

St Mark's has always supported mission here in the UK and to the ends of the earth.

The first missionary to be sent out was Alfred Willis, the first vicar of St Mark's, when he became Bishop of Honolulu in 1872



tearfund



We support a number of Mission Agencies and individuals, including Tearfund with sponsored events like as shown above.



Reaching out to students

The Universities at Medway are within the parish. This ministry has been supported by St Mark's over the years.





Reaching out to the local community



St Mark's Pre-school

Serving the local community in many and varied ways today.



Open Church



Major Projects undertaken in 2018 - 2020



New toilets, vestry and storage provision constructed.



New energy efficient boilers installed and heating system modifications.



Kitchen Project completed 2024



Kitchen, AV desk and storage provision opened by the Bishop of Rochester.



Rich History and links with the past

Some of the most influential Christian Leaders in the UK over the past 60 years have been through or have had connections with St Mark's

A Prophetic Word given for St Mark's

'We've been praying for you
Don't loose heart
Don't be afraid of having to
go on praying'



John Irvine, Sandy Millar, David MacInnes former curates of John Collins at New Wine Regional Conference 2019.



Joining the Episcopate



Vicar Saju Muthalaly consecrated at St Paul's Cathedral as the Bishop of Loughborough in 2022.



Catharina Olsson Gisleskog is appointed new Vicar.



St Mark's Curates since 1957

Vicar	Curate	Period
John Collins	David MacInnes	1957 - 1961
	David Watson	1959 - 1962
	Paul Russell	1961 - 1964
	Thomas Collett-White	1962-1966
	Jocelyn Laville	1964-1969
	John Freeth	1966-1972
	John Baker	1969-1973
James Tabern	Andrew Pearson	1971-1972
	Graham Cray	1971-1975
	John Byrne	1973-1976
	James Dainty	1976-1978



St Mark's Curates since 1957

Vicar	Curate	Period
Thomas Collett-White	Paul Perkin	1980-1984
	Jeremy Crossley	1984-1987
	Philip Venables	1988-1993
Colin Buchanan	Paul Kerr	1993-1998
	Jean Kerr	1993-1998
John Saunders	David Palmer	1999-2003
	James Findley	2004-2007
	Glenn McWatt	2008-2012
Peter Guinness	Robert Ryan	2012-2015
	Richard England	2013-2016
Saju Muthalaly	Amanda Maskell	2017 -



Characteristics of St Mark's

What has characterised and shaped St Mark's over the past 60 + years and before and led to great blessings?

- Chief aim to worship God
- Openness to the work and gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Vision and expectation
- Consistent in prayer
- Outstanding leadership
- Evangelistic outreach locally and globally
- Sound relevant teaching
- Diversity and acceptance
- Pastoral care and support



Lessons Learned

‘Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat its mistakes’.

George Santayna

160 Years of St Mark's Gillingham

The story so far

**Thanks be to God for His past
faithfulness, with expectations of
many blessings to come in the
years ahead**