

# The Tower & Memorial Chapel of St John the Baptist

The Tower of St. Mary's is probably the best known feature of the Church, and can be seen from almost all over the town, as well as by oarsmen and women lining up at the Start for the Royal Regatta races!

It stands over 100 feet high and is constructed of stone and knapped flint. Dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, the tower was built under the instruction of Bishop John Longland, a Henley man, born in the house next to the Church which bears his name. He was Bishop of Lincoln from 1521-1524, and was, for a time, confessor to King Henry VIII – hardly an enviable task! He was a generous benefactor to his birthplace, and gave not only the new tower to the Church, but also bequeathed some of our ancient alms houses flanking the churchyard. The fine west window of the tower by Clayton and Bell, given in 1883 by the local MP, is in thanksgiving for Edward Pusey, one of the founders of the Catholic Revival in the Church of England.

The font is a 19<sup>th</sup> Century pastiche of a mediaeval font, and originally stood just inside the main door of the church; it was moved here in c1870.

On the south side of the baptistery is the Roll of those who died in the First World War. This was compiled by local historian Michael Willoughby, who became aware that the war memorials throughout Henley neither matched, nor were complete. This memorial is the result of many hours of painstaking work on his part.

Against the West wall is a catafalque topped by the lid of a stone coffin. Its date and decoration would suggest that this was the coffin of Americus de Harcourt, first Rector of Henley (d c1224), who is buried beneath the High Altar.

**Almighty God, kindle in the hearts of all people the true love of peace; and guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom those who take counsel for the nations of the world: that in tranquillity your kingdom may go forward, till the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love.**

**Through Christ our Lord. Amen**