

'It went to New Zealand'
The Story of the Rood







One of the most beautiful objects in the church is hanging from the roof. The story of how it got there is worthy of a little aside.

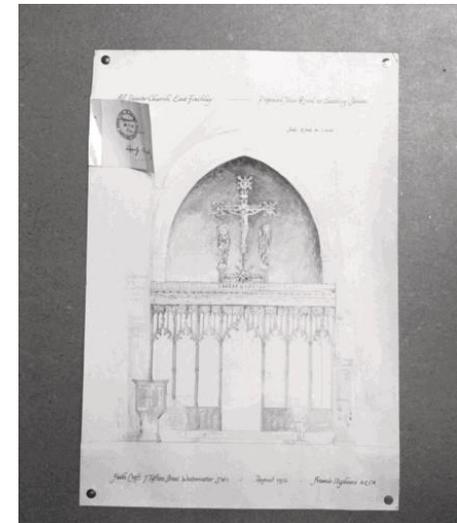
In July 1950 the PCC began to think about the Church's 60th anniversary in 1952. A 'Diamond Jubilee Fund' was set up and by December a list of proposals was approved, one of them was for the dismantling of the choir screen and erection of a rood, a large crucifix.

In October 1951 it was agreed that rather than dismantling the screen there ought to be a 'modification' to it with the rood placed on top. A month or two later Fr Rushmer revealed they had found a second-hand rood at St Thomas's in Baroness Road, Bethnal Green. The church had been hit by German bombs in the Second World War and was facing demolition.

The rood was, unlike the church, in good repair and available to be installed at the very reasonable price of £200. Three months later it was revealed another church with a rather better claim on the rood had got in first.

A few months passed and the PCC was told that the firm Faith Craft in St Albans had been asked by Fr Rushmer to come up with plans for a new rood to be installed at the top of the modified chancel screen.

Faith Craft had been set up during the First World War to provide cheap vestments to struggling country churches. Over the years under the direction of Mr George Beadle it had branched out into stained glass, processional crosses and roods.





‘The Festival of Britain’s exhibition of church art was organised by Mr Beadle.’

The jubilee came and went. Fr Rushmer died. But still no rood.

Fr Allso then arrived and agreed that they should press on with plans for a rood to honour Fr Rushmer. A new request was sent to Mr Beadle in St Albans.

In October 1953, Mr Beadle sent back his revised plans. The cross was to be 13 feet high, the figures 5 feet high and full colour. The diocesan advisory committee was asked to approve the new design and installation and a new deadline was set for the dedication festival of October 1954.

The deadline passed.

However, it was also revealed that the cost has risen to £650 and so it was decided that the ‘financial angle’ of the rood ought not to be shared with the congregation.

Then new plans were revealed. The top half of the chancel screen was to be removed and used to screen off the Lady Chapel. However, members of the PCC remembered that the original fund raising in 1951 had come with the promise that the screen would not be removed. A parish meeting with Mr Beadle was called.

The parish meeting failed to happen.

Following inquiries to Faith Craft it transpired correspondence to All Saints’ in N2 had been going to All Saints’ in NZ. The letters had been going to New Zealand.

The parish meeting then finally took place. 20 of the 23 present said they would like the screen to be removed, two disagreed and one had no opinion to offer. The screen was kept. No, I do not understand either.

Then in September 1955, a circular was sent out informing parishioners that the rood was almost complete. Everything looked set to be in place for Fr East’s celebrations of 50 years since his ordination. Fr East’s celebrations came and went.

A few months later George Beadle died and in January 1957, Fr Allso fell seriously ill.

It was at this point the rood finally arrived and it was magnificent. It was dedicated on April 28th, (Low Sunday).



However, unlike the rood the organ truly is second hand. Mr Newbold's original instrument which had cost £210 was almost beyond repair and the organ you find today originally stood in the Wesleyan Chapel in Clapham High Street. It was built in 1878 by the firm of Alfred Hunter and once again it was available because of a German bomb. The cost of moving and restoring the organ was £2000, a huge amount in 1951. Amazingly £2100 was raised within three months. It was installed by Mr HA Bate, the father of the renowned organist, Jennifer Bate.



