

## Worship

**Look.** What assumptions did the original builders make about the character of worship? For example: how prominent is the pulpit and/or the altar? Is there an original screen and/or choir stalls? Is the organ contemporary with the building or a later addition? When were pews installed/removed? What church furnishings were originally installed, or added at a later date? Are there still old hymnbooks and other publications lying around that give clues as to the content of services in the past? Do any old magazines or noticeboards allow you to reconstruct the past pattern of services?

Also consider the ways in which the design of the building may have constrained or even prevented subsequent changes in worship styles: some church buildings are not well-suited to elaborate liturgy whereas conversely others are always likely to serve as a brake on moves towards greater informality in worship.

**Listen.** Personal recollections of changes in the style and pattern of worship are likely to be very interesting. Bear in mind that the laity often perceive such alterations in a different way from the clergy, especially if the clergy are motivated by theological considerations that they do not succeed in communicating fully to the congregation. Hence lay people who would not necessarily disagree with an incumbent's theology can nevertheless be irritated by what they perceive as pointless innovation or insensitive discontinuation of valued established practice. For information on oral history, see the Building on History website for further details.

**Read.** For surveys of changes in worship and church music during the Victorian era see the chapter on the Church of England by Gerald Parsons on *Religion in Victorian Britain, Volume 1* (Manchester, 1988) and that by John Wolffe on hymns and church music in *Religion in Victorian Britain Volume 5* (Manchester 1997). More detailed accounts are provided in: Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, 6 volumes covering the period between the Reformation and the present; the first five were originally published by Princeton University Press between 1961 and 1970; they were reprinted by Eerdmans in 1996 with an additional volume covering developments since the 1960s. Nigel Yates, *Building, Faith and Worship: The Liturgical Arrangement of Anglican Churches 1600-1900*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

**Research.** Registers of services kept in parish records at the **London Metropolitan Archives** or elsewhere are likely to be instructive, while **Visitation Returns** provide occasional reports of the pattern of worship. If anything controversial occurred – and many parishes were divided by ritual disputes in the later nineteenth century – then the Bishop of London may well have become involved and there could accordingly be relevant correspondence in the **Fulham Papers**. Local and even national **newspapers** may also have taken an interest. See the Building on History website for further details.

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<http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/test-building-on-history-project/resource-guide/research/worship.htm>