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Holmbury St Mary,
Surrey

Church's 125th birthday

The Surrey hills village of Holmbury St Mary was crystallised in the 1870s from a set of woodland hamlets

The church from which Holmbury St Mary's name is partly drawn was consecrated just 125 years ago in November, 1879. It was built by the architect George Edmund Street (famous for the Law Courts in the

Strand, London). He created it in memory of his second wife who died of a fever in Italy.

Its unusual design is closely modelled on Street's Crimean War Memorial Church in Istanbul, dedicated in 1868. Both Holmbury and Istanbul have challenging sites on steep east-facing slopes which run counter to the normal rise in floor levels. The design in both

cases was a single vessel church, with a continuous roof ridge over the nave and chancel and a heavily buttressed east end, with the chancel raised over an additional floor. Holmbury's St Mary the Virgin is constructed mainly of local sandstone with a typical Surrey wooden steeple.

When George Street died it may have been expected that he would be buried there with his wife, but he ended up in the more salubrious surroundings of Westminster Abbey.

Many of the village cottages have a distinctive version of mock timbering, created by the estate of the leading Victorian accountant Edwin Waterhouse. Holmbury Hill nearby is the site of an Iron Age hillfort with fine views.

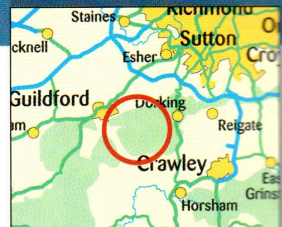
Raymond Smith

Don't miss The tomb of Jesse Street in the outside of the Chancel south wall.



The church of St Mary has a surprising connection to the Crimean War

INFORMATION



St Mary the Virgin Church,
Holmbury St Mary, Dorking, Surrey
☎ 01306 730285

www.cofeguildford.org.uk/parishes/dorking/w-hsm.shtml

Open Mon–Tue 9am–5pm. Free

Guildford tourist information



If you like this try

Old West Surrey by Gertrude Jekyll (Phillimore, 1999, first pub. 1904)

Place to visit nearby

Shere Museum ☎
www.surreymuseums.org.uk

Have a look at an aquatint from 1810 depicting the nearby Surrey church of Great Bookham: www.bl.uk/collectbritain/bookham