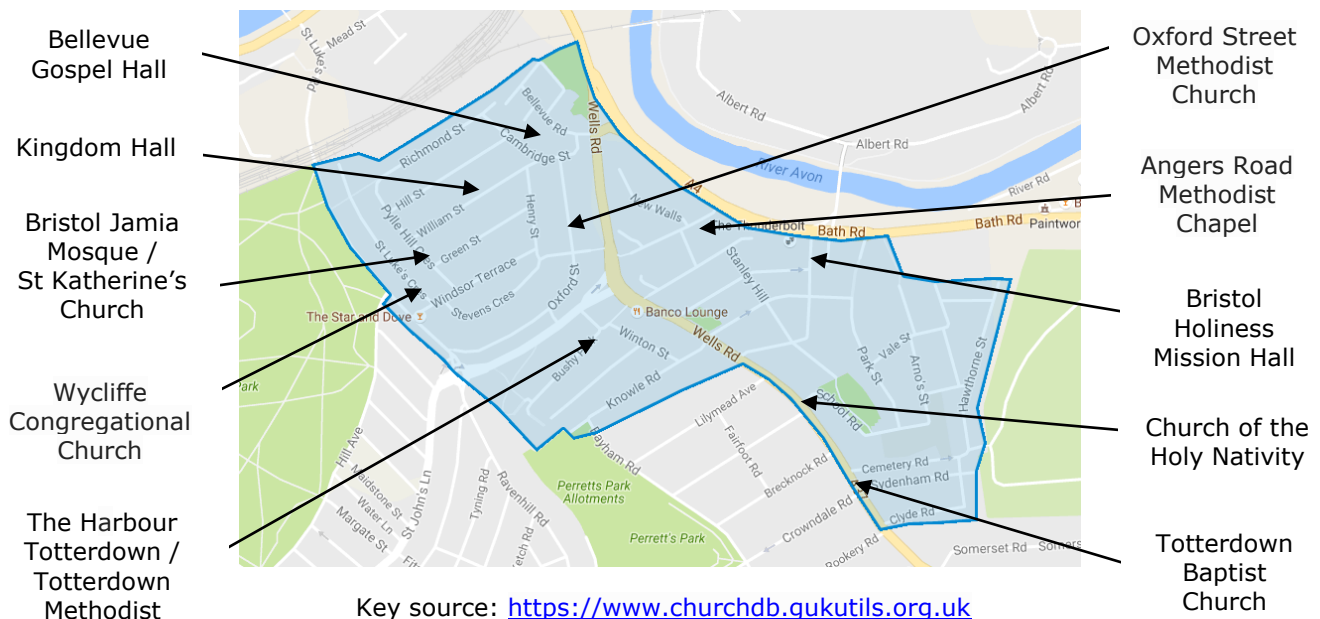


Totterdown's religious buildings past and present

Bristol Walk Fest 2025, walk led by **TRESAcic**
with grateful thanks to **Greenwoods Property Centre** for help with printing



Disclaimer: Please note, while effort has been made to research the information provided, accuracy cannot be guaranteed

Church of the Holy Nativity, Wells Road

Founded in 1865. Denomination: Anglican

The foundation of the church is recorded by John Latimer, in *The Annals of Bristol in the Nineteenth Century* (1887). A small wooden chapel was erected at Knowle early in 1865. Growing attendance led to the construction of the chancel of a permanent church, built of brick, and dedicated to the Nativity, which was consecrated in September 1871. "A large



portion of the permanent nave was added in 1883; but Bishop Ellicott, before its consecration in June of that year, required the removal of a structure called a baldacchino, surmounting the Communion-table, and the incumbent, with much lamentation, complied with the demand".

A 'baldacchino' was a canopy over the altar, made originally of brocade from Baghdad; the Bishop may have considered it too 'high church'.

Today the church website indicates: "We are mindful that when he donated the very ground upon which Holy Nativity Church stands on, Mr. S. Goolden did so in the understanding that Anglo

Catholic principles and practices should characterise the teaching and the worship at Holy Nativity. That continues to this very day."

The church was described in Kelly's Directory of Bristol of 1902 as "a building of red brick with stone dressings in the Byzantine style, from designs by Mr. W.V. Gough, of Bristol".

The original building did not have a tower. This later addition was completed 1931-3 by A.R. Gough. It is the only part of the Gough's church to survive, as the remainder of the building was damaged during WWII. During the first heavy air raid on Bristol on 24 November 1940, Holy Nativity was the first church to be destroyed in the city. The raid began at around 6pm and the first hour of the attack marked the destruction of the church. Due to the blackout

regulations introduced some months earlier, Evensong had been brought forward to 3.30pm and this undoubtedly saved lives. The tower, clock and bells survived the destruction, and it



was said that the clock continued to chime as the flames engulfed the church.

The Church Tower is Grade II listed, and described by Historic England, as: Church tower. 1871-83. By A Ponton and WV Gough. Bridgwater brick walls with limestone dressings and copper-covered spire. Square tower with one adjoining bay of aisle; the body of the church was destroyed in World War II. Lombardic-Romanesque style. 5 storeys, diminishing slightly at the string courses. Lancet doorway with polychromatic arch, and 2 similar side windows; statue in carved Gothic niche on 3 corbels above doorway, and panelled stone band; second, third and top storeys have 1, 2 and 4

arched openings, the latter forming an arcade on slim columns. Bands of yellow brick become progressively thinner and closer together from ground to second floor; thereafter plain red brick.

The church itself was rebuilt between 1953 and 1956 by J M Meredith.

Totterdown Baptist Church, Wells Road

Founded in 1881. Denomination: Baptist

The Baptist Church in Bristol can trace its roots to the mid-17th century. Earlier churches were simple meeting houses, especially when the Baptist church was persecuted. However, by the 19th century larger buildings were built.



Totterdown Baptist Church is a solid stone building designed by Alfred Harford, and was erected at a cost of £2,100. It could seat 520 worshippers. The following notice in *The London Gazette* of 1 September 1882 (p.4075) recorded its registration for marriages:

NOTICE is hereby given, that a separate building, named the Totterdown Baptist Chapel, situate at Totterdown, in the parish of Bedminster, in the county of Somerset, in the district of Bedminster, being a building certified according to law as a place of religious worship,

was, on the 12th day of August, 1882, duly registered for solemnizing marriages therein, pursuant to the Act 6th and 7th Wm. 4, cap. 85. Dated 15 August 1882.

The Church and attached front area walls are Grade II listed, and described by Historic England: Baptist chapel. 1880. By Alfred Harford. Pennant rubble with limestone dressings, slate hipped and gable roof. Open plan. Romanesque Revival style. 2 storeys; 5-window range. A symmetrical front has a gabled centre set forward with a first-floor band with sunken roundels, moulded impost bands, gabled kneelers and a moulded coping; lower outer sections with hipped roofs, with single-storey gabled porches with buttressed sides, semicircular-arched doorways with imposts, attached colonnettes and oculi above, to 2-leaf doors with strap hinges. Central ground-floor arcade of 6 semicircular-arched windows with carved capitals at the ends and small colonnettes; tripartite first-floor semicircular-arched windows with panelled aprons between plinths supporting attached colonnettes, paired to the taller middle window. Horizontal glazing bars with stained-glass margin panes. Above the doorways are paired semicircular-arched windows below a segmental-arched label with stops. Return elevations have 7-window ranges, paired first-floor windows in segmental-arched ashlar surrounds, above 3-light mullion windows. INTERIOR: 3-sided balcony on cast-iron columns, with bowed cast-iron railings; similar railings to the raised preaching box at the E end, with steps up each side; SE organ.

Bristol Holiness Mission Hall (later Church of the Nazarene), Summer Hill (repurposed)

Founded by 1924. Denomination: Christian evangelical in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition

The building is of red brick, with sand-coloured brick dressings around the windows, door, and at the corners. At the front are 2 rectangular windows on either side of a central round-arched doorway, approached by a flight of steps. Above it is a round-arched window, divided into 2 by a horizontal cross bar. Below the cross bar the window is divided into 9 lights, and above it 3 more lights, the arch above them filled with radial glazing. The sides are of 5 bays. The north side has 4 rectangular windows and one smaller, almost square window in the rear bay, and the south side abuts the end of a terrace of houses.

The London Gazette of 5 August 1924 (p.5908) recorded its registration for marriages:

A Separate Building, duly certified for religious worship, named BRISTOL HOLINESS MISSION HALL, situated at Summer Hill, Totterdown, in the civil parish of Bristol, in the county borough of Bristol, in Bristol registration district, was, on the twenty-eighth July, 1924, registered for solemnizing marriages therein, pursuant to 6th and 7th Wm. IV, c.85. Dated 31 July 1924.

Although no notice of cancellation of a registration under the name 'Bristol Holiness' has been found, a cancellation for the 'Church of the Nazarene' in Summer Hill was published in the *Gazette* of 31 July 1987 (p.9798):

The Registrar General, being satisfied that CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE, Summer Hill, Totterdown, in the registration district of Bristol in the Non-Metropolitan County of Avon is no longer used as a place of worship by the congregation on whose behalf it was on 28th July 1987, registered for marriages in accordance with the Marriage Act 1836, has cancelled the registration. Dated 13 July 1987.

The building was used for commercial storage for several years. In November 2011 it was described as "a non-listed Church with lapsed planning permission for conversion into four flats with underground parking". Photographs showed that whilst the building was derelict, some features of its previous history remained, for example, a legend on the rear (east) wall read 'Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness' presumably above where the altar would have been. The building was eventually sold and converted into flats.



Summer Hill, Bristol

£250,000 ⓘ

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Connells (2025): Centrally located and situated within a 15-minute walk to Bristol Temple Meads and many more local amenities, this is a great opportunity to acquire this lovely 1-bedroom apartment in the fantastic community of Totterdown. Offered for sale with the benefit of no onward chain worries, the property boasts its own private entrance, a large sitting room, a spacious kitchen dining room, a double bedroom with walk in storage cupboard and a shower room. The property also benefits from a communal gym, bike and bin stores.

Angers Road Methodist Chapel, Angers Road (demolished)

Founded in 1878. Denomination: Primitive Methodist

The chapel belonged to Bristol Second Circuit of Primitive Methodists, which also included Essex Street in Bedminster, Bedminster Down Chapels, and one at Keynsham. It was demolished by 1952 and the site redeveloped as a garage. This was also demolished in the 1970's to allow for a road scheme that was never completed. Housing was built instead, though the site of the chapel was left as part of a landscaped area. It was closed by 1973, and was demolished along the homes in the area as part of the clearances for a ring road that was never completed.



Photo: https://www.flickr.com/photos/fray_bentos/2291192530

Oxford Street Methodist Church, Oxford Street/Bush Street (demolished)

Founded in 1875. Denomination: Free/United Methodist

Old Maps show that Oxford Street Methodist Church was situated on the north-east corner of the junction of Oxford Street with Bush Street. It was described as 'United Free' and had seats for 300. Bush Street was a short cut between Oxford Street and Wells Road that no longer exists.

Phil Draper's ChurchCrawler website describes a "lancet chapel", and a minister's house with quirky windows. The following notice in *The London Gazette* of 27 July 1880 (p.4138) recorded the Church's registration for marriages:

NOTICE is hereby given, that a separate building, named Methodist Free Church, situate at Oxford-street, Totterdown, in the parish of Bedminster, in the county of Somerset, in the district of Bedminster, being a building certified according to law as a place of religious worship, was, on the 13th day of July, 1880, duly registered for solemnizing marriages therein, pursuant to the Act of 6th and 7th Wm. 4, cap. 85. Dated 16 July 1880.

A similar notice, published in the *Gazette* of 1 February 1963 (p.1019) recorded the cancellation of the registration, and indicated the building was no longer used. It was demolished in 1972 and the site is now occupied by a row of shops. The Bristol Record Office hold records of baptisms for the period 1902-1961, and marriages for the period 1900-1962.

Bellevue Gospel Hall, Bellevue Road (repurposed)

Founded in 1880. Denomination: Plymouth Brethren



Photo: David Hallam-Jones Church History

Constructed during the blossoming of the Victorian phase of Non-Conformism this chapel was built as a meeting place for an expanding local Plymouth Brethren group. The chapel was built in 1882 following a successful tent mission on a nearby site. Its front elevation is on Bellevue Road but it was extended in 1887 with a long intercommunicating corridor connecting it to a back entrance on Cambridge Street.

The front facing Bellevue Road has two pointed-arched windows and a central entrance. The building was said to have 150 seats for the congregation.

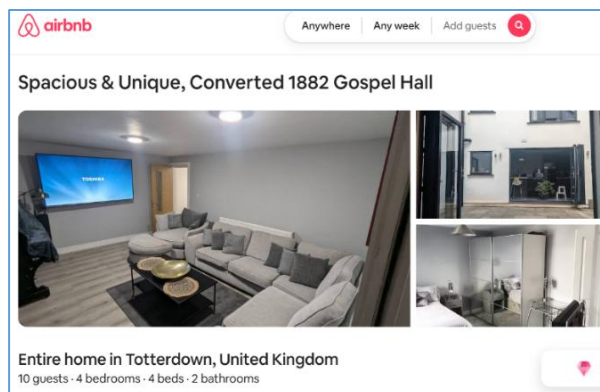
The Ecclesiastical section of Kelly's Directory of Bristol of 1914 lists it as "Gospel Hall, Belle Vue Rd, Totterdown" under the section for "Brethren". Services were held on Sundays at 10:45 and 6:30, Sunday School was at 2:45, and Men's Bible Class at 3pm. A Women's Bible Class was held on Mondays from 8 to 9pm; a meeting for Young People was held on Tuesdays, again at 8pm; and on Wednesdays a Prayer Meeting took place at 7.30pm.

The building backs onto Cambridge Street, but some sources record it as being in Cambridge Street itself, as in the following notice in *The London Gazette* of 11 January 1921 (p.309):

A Separate Building, duly certified for religious worship, named GOSPEL HALL, situated at Cambridge-street, Bedminster, in the civil-parish of Bristol, in the county borough of Bristol, in Bristol registration district, was, on the fifth January, 1921, registered for solemnizing marriages therein, pursuant to 6th and 7th Wm. IV, c.85. Dated 8 January 1921.

In the 1930s and 40s, 300 children were members of the chapel. In 1940, during the Bristol blitz, there was an air raid while children were attending the evening meeting. They were led into the middle corridor, considered the safest place, until there was a lull in the bombing. Children's meetings were cancelled until the end of the war, but resumed and continued until 1963.

By 2025 the building had been converted to Airbnb.



Kingdom Hall (Private House), 17 William Street (closed in 1956)

Founded by 1953. Denomination: Jehovah's Witness

This ordinary terraced house appears to have been Bedminster's first meeting place for Jehovah's Witnesses. The following notice in *The London Gazette* of 17 February 1953 (p.987) recorded its registration for marriages:

A Building certified for worship named KINGDOM HALL, 17, William Street, Bedminster, in the registration district of Bristol, in the county borough of Bristol, was on 6th February, 1953, registered for solemnising marriages therein pursuant to section 41 of the Marriage Act, 1949. Dated 10 February, 1953.

Two notices in the *Gazette* provide a record of its closure. The first was published on 27 July 1956 (p.4360), and applied (apparently) to only part of the building, as a second notice of 5 April 1957 (p.2142) recorded the cancellation of the use of "Two Rooms, First Floor" of 17 William Street, which were registered originally on 19 July 1956.

St Katharine's Church, Pylle Hill Crescent / Green Street (closed in 1962)

Founded in 1889. Denomination: Anglican

St Katharine's Church, Totterdown was on the south-east corner of the junction of Pylle Hill Crescent and Green Street. It is called "St Katharine's Mission Church" in Kelly's Directory of Bristol of 1902, in "Green Street, Pylle hill crescent, Totterdown". The National Archives website indicates it was a mission of Holy Nativity Church, Knowle, licensed for worship in 1889.

According to The National Archives website the church closed "for liturgical purposes" on 30 August 1962. Weekly services for elderly people in Totterdown continued until 1964. The building was subsequently sold, and converted into Bristol Jamia Mosque.

A profile of St Katharine's on old maps shows it was smaller than the Mosque, occupying the front of the plot and possibly a porch facing towards Green Street. The rear of the plot was shown as unused, perhaps a garden area.

Bristol Jamia Mosque, Pylle Hill Crescent / Green Street

Founded about 1968. Denomination: Sunni / open to all traditions of Islam

A Bristol Muslim Association had been established in 1968. Members used St Katharine's mission hall for occasional functions and purchased the hall from the parish council for £2,500 to use as a mosque. It was the first mosque in Bristol. The following notice in *The London Gazette* of 26 June 1969 (p.6651) recorded its initial registration for marriages:

A building certified for worship named BRISTOL MOSQUE, Green Street, Totterdown, in the registration district of Bristol in the County Borough of Bristol, was on 20th June 1969, registered for solemnizing marriages therein, pursuant to section 41 of the Marriage Act, 1949, as amended by section 1(1) of the Marriage Acts Amendment Act, 1958. Dated 21 June 1969.



Situated on the junction of Pylle Hill Crescent with Green Street, its main entrance is facing Green Street, with a second entrance at the lower level of Pylle Hill Crescent into a basement storey. The walls are finished in white stucco, and the windows and doorways are outlined in pale green.

The dome (outer height 48.5m) and minaret (height 88m) were added in 1980. Both men and women pray at the mosque; it has a main hall (capacity 700) and a separate women's prayer hall (capacity 140). The building also houses classrooms for children and an event hall for

religious celebrations and other meetings. The main hall has a wooden Syrian mimbar (pulpit where the imam stands to deliver sermons). Bristol Jamia Mosque is a registered charity and a member of Council of Bristol Mosques, a multi-denominational organisation of mosques in the city established in 2009.

Wycliffe Congregational Church, Windsor Terrace/St Luke's Crescent (demolished)

Founded by 1899. Denomination: Congregational (later United Reformed).



Wycliffe Congregational Church, on the north-west corner of the junction of St Luke's Crescent with Windsor Terrace, equivalent to the width of 8 houses, and as deep as the house plots.

A notice in *The London Gazette* of 27 October 1899 (p.6469) recorded its registration for marriages:

NOTICE is hereby given, that a separate building named Wycliffe Congregational Church, situated at Windsor-terrace, Totterdown, in the civil parish of Bristol, in the county borough of Bristol, in the registration district of Bristol, being a building certified according to law as a place of meeting for

religious worship, was, on the 19th day of October, 1899, duly registered for solemnizing marriages therein, pursuant to the Act of 6th and 7th Wm. 4, c.85. Dated 20 October, 1899.

A similar notice, published in the *Gazette* of 10 June 1980 (p.8360) recorded the cancellation of the registration, and indicated the building was no longer used. Since then, it has been demolished and a block of houses, named 'Wycliffe Row', occupies the site. The Bristol Record Office hold records of marriages for the period 1901-1972 (as Congregational), and 1973-1974 (as United Reformed Church).

Totterdown Methodist Church, Bushy Park (repurposed)

Founded in 1872. Denomination: Wesleyan Methodist

Totterdown Methodist Church is a large building with its longer side facing towards Bushy Park. It has north and south transepts, and a short, stubby tower at the north-west corner. There are two tiers of 'gothic' windows, the upper one in the north transept being the largest, to which a crucifix is attached.

There is a Church Hall on Winton Lane at the rear, formerly a Sunday School, which is older than the main building, though not by many years. It opened in 1872 as a 'School Chapel'. The foundation of the Church was laid in 1874, to open the following year, with a service and the dedicatory sermon preached by the Rev. Gervase Smith. The following notice in *The London Gazette* of 13 April 1877 (p.2574) recorded its registration for marriages:

NOTICE is hereby given, that a separate building, named the Knowle Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, situate at Bushy Park, Totterdown, in the parish of Bedminster, in the county of Somerset, in the district of Bedminster, being a building certified according to law as a place of religious worship, was, on the 24th March, 1877, duly registered for solemnizing marriages therein, pursuant to the Act of 6th and 7th Wm. 4, cap. 85. Dated 28 March 1877.

It was first known as 'Knowle Wesleyan Church', later 'Knowle Methodist Chapel, Bushy Park, Totterdown', then 'Totterdown Methodist Church'.

In August 2022, after 150 years of continuous use as a Methodist building, the Methodist congregation closed their doors.



The Harbour Totterdown, Bushy Park

Founded in 2024. Denomination: Vineyard Churches (neocharismatic, evangelical Christian)

The Harbour Totterdown is a community initiative in the former Totterdown Methodist Church building. In September 2022 the Lighthouse Vineyard Church began meeting there for weekly community meals and, along with Severn Vineyard Church, uses the building as its administrative hub. Activities include the BS4 Foodbank outlet, Bristol Storehouse refugee Welcome Hub, and a Music Psychotherapy service. On 9 August 2024, Lighthouse Vineyard took ownership of the site with a view to developing it into a community hub.