

Vicarage

After the 1939-45 war the coal fields were nationalised and the landowners lost their coal revenues. This had a knock-on effect to clergy and curate wages, so much so that the Revd Basil Evans could not afford to live in the large vicarage with its grounds and so he exchanged houses with the doctor.

Churchyard

St Mary's two and a half acre churchyard is probably the largest in north Nottinghamshire. Do spend some time here, and if you like a challenge, try to spot the graves of Revd Ebenezer Cobham Brewer, the writer of the Dictionary of Phrase and Fable (1897); and Henry Pernee (1841), one of the original Bow Street runners who came to Edwinstowe to be the village constable.



Foundations

in 1952/3 The Coal Board decided to float the church on a raft of concrete and remove the column of coal which had been left under it. This caused much worry when it was discovered how shallow the foundations under the tower were.

Welcome to St Mary's Church Edwinstowe

The Parish Church of St Mary Edwinstowe is a beautiful and ancient place of worship in the heart of Sherwood Forest. It is visited by thousands of tourists annually, who come to see the church where, according to legend, Robin Hood and Maid Marian were married. The church continues to be a place of worship for a lively and welcoming congregation.

There was a church here before the Norman Conquest, reputed to be built over the site of the temporary grave of St Edwin, King of

Northumbria, after the battle of Heathfield.

Recorded in the Domesday Book and given by William II to the authority of Lincoln Cathedral St Mary's remained with them until 1878 when Earl Manvers exchanged it for St Mary's Nottingham.

The original wooden church was rebuilt in stone during the reign of Henry II, reputedly as part of his remorse for the murder of Archbishop Thomas à Beckett.

Being within the original Sherwood Forest,



Edwinstowe was subject to the Forest Laws which could be quite stringent; it wasn't hard to fall foul of the law, or to become an outlaw like Robin Hood. In the 1330s even two Vicars, John de Ryston of Edwinstowe and Thomas Fox, son of Henry de Edenstowe were convicted of deer poaching and stealing foliage respectively.

The villages also enjoyed a variety of forest privileges, including the right to marry without permission. Such marriages mostly took place in the doorway of the church, so if the legend is true, that is when Robin and Marian would have tied the knot.



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The information in this leaflet is taken from comprehensive historical research, which may be found in full at <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk>
Many thanks to Margaret Woodhead for her extensive research.



heritage learning welcome

5 The Forest Foot

In the north aisle, near the Rigley family memorial, is a peculiar large stone 15" long, 11" wide and 5" thick. This is The Forest Foot. The Register of Newstead Priory records that 'The Forest foot was used for renting the Wastes of the Forest, and was marked & graven in the chancel wall of Edenstowe and in the church of St Mary Nottingham and Newstede'.



3 Spire

The spire was added in the 15th century but has been rebuilt on about three occasions. In 1672 King Charles II was petitioned by the parishioners for '200 decayed oaks which are unfit for ship timber' from the Royal Forest of Sherwood towards the cost of repairs to the church which was 'extremely shaken and in a very ruinous condition' as the steeple had fallen seven years earlier due to being 'beaten down by thunder'. Charles consented and the spire was rebuilt. Only to be twice struck again and twice rebuilt in the following centuries.

6 Bronze Figure of Christ

This was originally a roadside calvary (shrine) and was brought back from some ruins in France during the war of 1914-18. It is a little gruesome - it has been suggested by some that they'd've done better to leave it there.



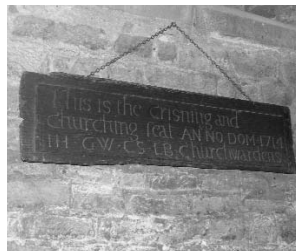
4 The Parish Map

This hangs at the back of the north aisle. It is a piece of embroidery, patchwork and tapestry 10' x 8' and was completed in 1996 after four years of work by many members of the community.



2 Bells & Clock

Originally having three bells, they were re-cast and three more added in 1871. The sixth one is inscribed with: "MY SOUND IT IS, ALL MEN TO CALL, TO SERVE THE LORD, BOTH GREAT AND SMALL"



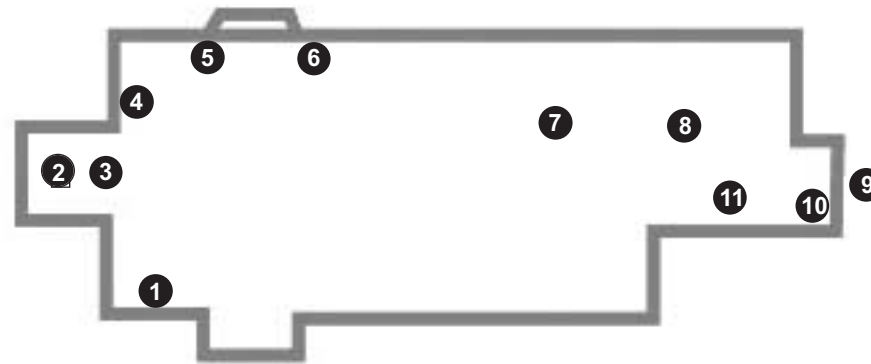
1 Christening and Churching Pew

Rescued from a hedge in 1849, this fragment of oak was once part of a special seat where a new mother and child were to sit for the traditional ceremonies of introduction, (or re-introduction for the mother) into the church.

7 Carved Heads on the Arches

The sculptured heads on the arches may have been inserted between 1260 and 1280. As you walk towards the altar, half way down on your right is Henry II and opposite him is Archbishop Thomas à Beckett. Next to Thomas à Beckett is a head said to be of Geoffrey Plantagenet rumoured son of Henry and his mistress "Fair Rosamund".

There are more carved heads - this time grotesque - by the tower arch. Most churches traditionally have one such head to frighten away the devil; here we have two.

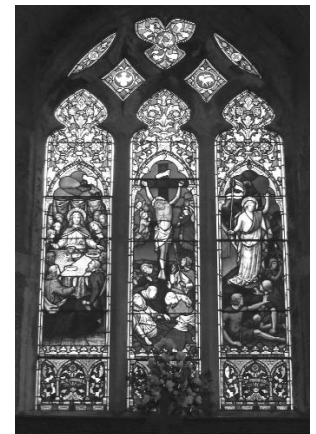


11 Communion Rail

Notice the plaque on the communion rail in memory of Revd Frank Day-Lewis, father of Cecil Day-Lewis, Poet Laureate: According to the dates Frank remained vicar here a year after his death.

9 Stained Glass

The East window (1864) is by Ward & Hughes of London. See if you can spot their trade mark hidden face.



10 Pillar Piscina

In the south east corner of the sanctuary is an unusual little ceremonial washing basin from the 12th century known as a 'pillar piscina'.



8 Organ

In the 1960s, the Revd Harold Pickles, a keen musician, planned to bring the choir and congregation closer together so he had the organ moved from the Chancel to the Nave. However his plans were somewhat stumped when he met strong opposition to moving the choir stalls.