

Churchyard

The main entrance to the churchyard is through a wooden gate at the north western corner. A curved path, over-arched by laurel and yew, leads to the south porch. There is also a gate at the north eastern corner. The churchyard includes some fine mature trees – a horse chestnut of about 150 years old; walnut, lime and sycamore. Many of the yews and the avenue of Portugal laurel were planted when the church was restored. Wildflowers are encouraged and in the spring the churchyard is full of snowdrops and primroses.

Headstones in the churchyard to note are the three 17th century headstones: Richard Uffen 1686, Henry Taylor 1693 and Thomas Roberts 1698. They are distinguished by being shorter and thicker than later headstones. Three Norwell vicars are buried in the churchyard: Edmund Herring, James Morris Maxfield and William Hutton.

Sundials

In the south west section of the churchyard is an early pedestal sundial. The dial itself is dated 1665, but the pedestal is dated 1736 and bears the names of two churchwardens, Richard Wright and Richard Birkett. There is also a mass dial, or scratch dial on the south west buttress of the south transept, and part of a reused mass dial on the south east wall of the entrance to the south porch.

War memorial

The War Memorial was put up in 1921. It is in the north west section of the churchyard overlooking the Cromwell Road.



Grave-marker

A sandstone grave-marker of around 1200, with a simple geometrical cross design, was broken in to pieces and used to form part of a ramp, replacing a step into the porch, in the 1970s. The head of the cross remains to the right of the door, and part of the shaft is visible on the left. This stone probably originally marked the grave of an early prebendary or vicar. It can be dated from the relatively undeveloped form of the cross.

Welcome to St Laurence's Church Norwell

The church dominates the approach to Norwell from the east. It looks out across the surrounding water meadows to The Beck in a peaceful rural setting. To the south of the churchyard is the site of a 12th century moated manor, once in the possession of the prebendary of Norwell Overhall. This manor was besieged in the Civil War.

Norwell was a 'church village' from the 10th-20th century and was unique in having three prebendaries or canons of Southwell, many of whom were rich and important in the Middle Ages. The great size of the church, it seats 400, reflects the ambitions

and generosity of these men over the centuries. The Domesday Book mentions a priest in Nortwelle in 1086 but the earliest substantial part of the existing church building is the late 12th century south doorway. There is architectural evidence that the nave and chancel were built in the late 12th century, and that additions, including two aisles, two transepts and the clerestory, were between the 13th and 15th centuries. The main stone of the church is skerry (dolomitic sandstone), which may have come from the nearby quarry in Maplebeck. By the 19th century the



church was in a very dilapidated state. The responsibility for restoration was given to Ewan Christian. The chancel was restored in 1857 and the rest of the church in 1874. Fortunately many of the earlier features were retained.

Points of historic interest include a 13th century aumbry, two 14th century stone effigies, a rood stairway, a most impressive 15th century clerestory and two windows with 20th century glass by Kempe. In the churchyard are three 17th century headstones, unusual in Nottinghamshire, and an interesting early sundial.



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heritage learning welcome

4 Earliest Stonework

The westernmost pillar of the north aisle is different from all the others. It dates from the early 12th century; the irregular stonework is probably all that remains of a small rectangular church with nave and chancel. Notice how the pillar is not square with the general lie of the aisle.



3 Clock

The clock dates from before 1850; it was removed from Nottingham General Hospital in 1947/8 and was bought for Norwell church in 1953.

2 Inscriptions on Lead

Beneath the list of incumbents on the north wall is a piece of lead, taken from the roof during repairs in 1993. On it are various initials and signatures, an alphabet in capitals (spot the characters the writer had trouble with!), the date, and the outline of a shoe.



5 Carved heads

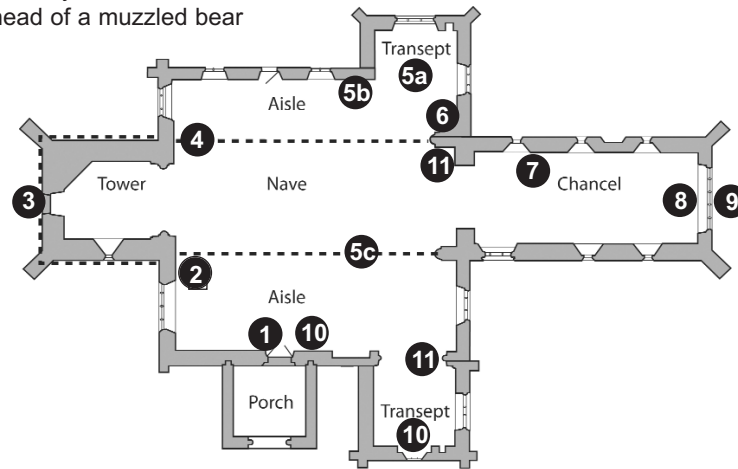
The fine, carved timber-roof of the north transept is the only part of the roof that dates from the 15th century. The southernmost boss is a green man (5a). Look out for 'Toothy' at the junction with the north aisle (5b). Carved in stone and dating from around 1250 he clearly needed to visit the dentist! High on the south wall of the nave below the clerestory are three carved heads; the centre one is the head of a muzzled bear (5c).

1 South door

The south doorway was probably moved to its present position when the south aisle was added; its solid round pillars, with waterleaf capitals date it to 1200-25 when the walls of the earliest stone church would have been punched through.

11 Font and Pulpit

The church was restored by the architect, Ewan Christian in 1857 and 1874. It is said that he completed the work in his "spare time" while he was employed at Southwell Minster. The font, pulpit and reredos were put in in 1876. The font was a gift from the vicar at that time, William Hutton, and his wife.



6 Rood stairs

The stairs in the easternmost pillar of the north aisle led to the opening to the rood screen, originally separating the chancel from the main body of the church. It was probably removed in the early 16th century.

7 Choir stalls

These were built by Henry Clipsham, a Norwell builder, in 1857-8. The cost was £34.

10 Effigies

There are two stone effigies. In the south transept is the figure of an armed, cross-legged knight of c1330 with the head detached from the body. Traditionally this effigy has been identified with Sir John de Lysours, Lord of Willoughby by Norwell, whose turbulent career was documented until his murder in 1322. In the south aisle is the serene figure of a lady with her hands placed together in prayer c1300-1350. The lady is unidentified but it is likely that she belongs to the same family for whom the male figure was carved.



8 Reredos

The three panels depict: a pelican feeding its young, a cross, and a lamb with a flag, with angels to left and right.

9 Glass

All the existing stained glass has been put in since the Victorian restorations. The East window (1908), by Charles Kempe, was completed after his death



by his nephew, Walter Tower. This is confirmed by the wheat sheaf (Kempe's signature) containing a tower (Tower's signature) in the bottom left sector of the window. The figures depicted include: St Laurence; St Mary; Christ; St John; and St Hugh of Lincoln. The window in the north aisle is from 1903, also by Kempe. The pinnacled city, also in the east windows is typical of Kempe windows.