

welcome to st nicholas' church BRADFIELD



A Christian church has stood on this site for around 900 years and the present building is over 500 years old. During this time countless generations have come to worship God and ask for His blessings. However, this is not just a church of the past but a living community which has evolved through changing congregations and will continue to do so for generations of Christians yet to be born.

Even before entering the church, the visitor to Bradfield is reminded of over 1000 years of history connected with this tiny village, but large parish, in the foothills of the Pennines. To the north-west of the church stands a motte and bailey fortress built by William the Conqueror's knights. Before then, Bradfield held a strategic role as a boundary area between Roman and Celtic England, the kingdoms of Northumbria and Mercia, and now the Archbishopsrics of Yorks and Canterbury.

To the south lies Low Bradfield where a Saxon cross was found, indicating a Christian place of worship in the area long before the first stone-built church in Bradfield. Until 1868 the Church of St Nicholas, first built about 1109, was a chapel-of-ease in the large parish of Ecclesfield. Both places of worship were under the control of the monks of St Wandrille's Abbey in Normandy. Surviving remains of the Norman church include two rounded pillars in the north aisle. Behind the church gate stands the Watch House which was built, in 1831, to combat body-snatchers who needed corpses for research in Sheffield's recently founded medical schools.

Start your tour at the west end of the church and glance up at the roof as you walk round. The beams are remarkable for the 76 bosses dating from the late 15th century. On the centre beam, among other interesting carvings, you can see the Talbot dog of the Earls of Shrewsbury surmounting the chancel arch and a 'green man' over the aisle crossing. The oak chandeliers hanging from the beams, designed by the ecclesiastical architect GG Pace, were added in 1951 when the church had electricity installed.

The Tower (1)

The tower houses a peal of eight bells. Six older bells were replaced by Taylors of Loughborough in 1847 and another two were cast by the same firm in 1996. A small meeting room is at ground level in the tower.

The Font (2)

The plain Norman font is made of magnesian limestone and has a lead-lined bowl. It is possible that it was given by the monks of Roche Abbey in the 12th century. The church's Baptism records go back to 1559.

The Saxon Cross (3)

The five bosses or balls on the cross are thought to represent drops of Christ's blood similar to consecration crosses found on some stone altars.

The Medieval Window (4)

This contains fragments of original 15th century glass with fine examples of 'silver staining'. It was put together during a large re-ordering of the church in the late 19th century.

The 'Comper' Window (5)

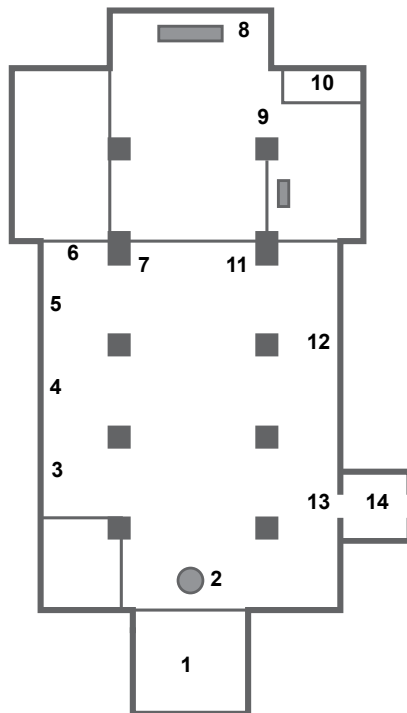
By the eminent designer Sir John Ninian Comper, the window has his trademark strawberry in the bottom right-hand corner. There are 15 other stained glass windows in the church, all but one installed during the re-ordering.

The Oak Chest (6)

The chest is a 12th century 'dug-out', hewn from a solid tree trunk. The only join is where the lid is hinged on. One of the largest existing chests in the country, it was made from an oak of over 10ft girth and used to store donations for the Crusades.

The Pulpit (7)

Most of the present furniture was carved and fitted by the Sheffield wood craftsman Arthur Hayball and his daughter, Clara, in the late 19th century. After her father's death, Clara continued the carving including the five intricate panels of the pulpit which depict Christ and the four Gospel writers with their symbols.



The Reredos and Altar (8)

In the sanctuary, the reredos is comprised of oak panels brought from Caen in Normandy by the then Rector, in 1886, and assembled by the Hayballs. Larger panels of the same origin decorate the front and sides of the altar.

The Morewood Brass (9)

In memory of the well-known local family of the 17th century, John and Grace Morewood are depicted kneeling at a prayer desk surrounded by their nine sons and seven daughters.

The Sunken Vestry (10)

An unusual feature off the chancel is the sunken vestry which once provided refuge for visiting priests who might have to stay the night during inclement weather.

The Lectern (11)

The oak eagle lectern was carved in New York and won a major award at the 1876 Philadelphia International Exhibition. It was donated to the church by a Canadian benefactor.

The Flood Plaque (12)

A slate plaque in the south aisle commemorates the Sheffield Flood of 1864 when the nearby Dale Dyke Dam burst and 240 people were drowned.

The Royal Coat of Arms (13)

Above the main south door is a surviving Royal Coat of Arms from the reign of George III. It was painted by Edward Bennett in 1805, probably to celebrate Nelson's victory at Trafalgar.

The Porch (14)

Whilst in the porch, facing the exterior, take a look just above eye-level on the left wall. There are re-used sections of a medieval coffin lid showing the shaft of a Calvary (stepped) cross. The grooves in the stone seats of the porch are a result of arrows being sharpened - the church was a meeting place and in medieval times archery would have been practised in the churchyard.

Now take a look round the outside of the church. A square bell tower was added to the Norman structure in the early 15th century before the church was rebuilt and enlarged in the 1480s. There are many gargoyles staring down on people passing by.

The Churchyard

Twelve victims of the 1864 flood are buried in the churchyard but only two families are commemorated on gravestones. The War Memorial, where the 24 men of the parish killed in the First World War are remembered, is in the north-west section of the graveyard. The names of three men killed in the Second World War have been added since. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission is responsible for the upkeep of eight graves. Another 19 family graves remember men who died in the Wars but were buried abroad.

The oldest graves are on the south side of the churchyard. On the south path near the porch is the grave of Nicholas Stede, buried in 1639. His stone was moved to its present position during the widening of the path. Also on the path is an unfinished gravestone that surely makes everyone smile - "Here lieth the body of Joseph Beaver who died".

Please sign the Visitors' Book at the back of church before you leave.

**We hope that you have enjoyed your visit.
May God bless you as you go on your way.**

You will be made very welcome at any of the
Church Services

1st & 3rd Sundays in the month:

10:30am Holy Communion (BCP) 6:30pm Evensong

2nd & 5th Sundays in the month:

10:30am Holy Communion (CW) 6:30pm Evensong

4th Sunday in the month:

10:30am Morning Prayer (BCP) 6:30pm Holy Communion

Every Sunday: 10:30am Toddlers' Church

Holy Days: 10:00am Holy Communion

Baptisms, weddings and funerals by arrangement with the Rector.



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