

# welcome to ST WILFRID'S CHURCH cantley

**“Wilcuma!”** - A welcome extended since Saxon times to our neighbours, friends and visitors to the ancient church of St Wilfrid, Cantley. We are a church in the Catholic tradition within the Church of England, affiliated to Forward in Faith and serving as the Parish Church for Cantley, Branton and Bessacarr, a community of some 5,800 homes.



A church has stood on this site since Saxon times and it is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086. It is believed that the church was founded on a site used for earlier worship or the site of a Romano-British pagan temple or burial ground. The church is dedicated to St Wilfrid which also suggests a Roman connection. Records of the church going back to 1218 are in the archives of York Minster.

Prior to the Dissolution of the Monasteries by Henry VIII, the church had belonged to Wallingwells Priory at Carlton in Lindrick but later passed into the hands of the Childers family. The church suffered from neglect from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century but a restoration was carried out in 1884. This work was subsequently re-ordered and extended in a magnificent manner in 1894 by John Ninian Comper.

Parts of the present church are 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century with the west tower being 14<sup>th</sup> century. In order to cater for the expanding population of the parish, an extension was added to the north side of the church in 1989. It was designed by Donald Buttress, Surveyor of the Fabric to Westminster Abbey and a recognised authority on the work of Sir Ninian Comper.

Our church is considered to have one of the finest examples of the early work of Sir Ninian Comper who recreated the atmosphere of an English medieval parish church at St Wilfrid's with his elaborate rich decoration, Rood Screen, Reredos and other furnishings.

## The Porch (1)

This area is thought to be the oldest area of the church. The evidence for this is the dog-tooth moulding on the external part of the main door arch, similar to moulding on the west front of Lincoln Cathedral dated 1032.

## The Font and Lady Chapel (2)

The Font was moved to its present location during the 1989 extension work. The cover is Comper design, which was intended to be decorated and gilded though this work has never been completed. The first screen through which you pass was moved from the north aisle in 1989 whilst those around the Lady Chapel are in their original location. The window reveals on the East Window in the Lady Chapel have medieval stencilling (restored c1960). The original window glass faded and was replaced with the present window by Comper. Like a number of features in the church, the window was donated by the Childers family.

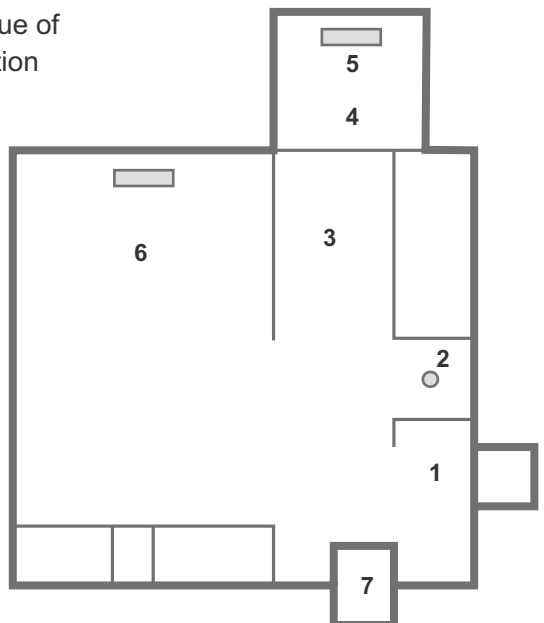
## The Nave and Rood Screen (3)

This area is dominated by the Comper designed Rood Screen. Whilst this screen was being installed, remnants of an earlier screen were found. The symbolism of the screen is that we pass from this life (the plain Nave) to eternal life (the decorated Chancel) via death (the gateway) which Jesus opened to us by his death on the cross. The Latin text translates as “O thou who reignest from the tree, gather beneath your feet, us, the builders of the screen”.

To the right of the Rood Screen is a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary with the inscription “S Mary pray for us”. Flanking the Crucifix on the Rood Screen are statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St John. The implication is that the prayers of Our Lady and all the Angels and Saints will aid us on our journey.

## The Chancel (4)

The Chancel is richly decorated to represent the glories of paradise. In the Sanctuary, the Blessed Sacrament is kept in a hanging Pyx above the High Altar. This was a feature of early churches, reintroduced by Comper, of which St Wilfrid’s was the first.



The Comper work on the north wall and ceiling was restored in 2008. The priests' door to the right of the Chancel was bricked up until the 1890s. The windows in this area are connected to the Childers family and the Victorian era. The East Window is Early English with representations of the Holy Mother and Child, St Wilfrid and St John of Beverley (cradling Beverley Minster). The Patron Saints of the Sheffield Diocese, St Peter and St Paul, stand on the east wall and on the north side of the Chancel is a statue of our Patron Saint, St Wilfrid.

Comper's mark, some small strawberries, can be seen in the window on the north wall closest to the Rood Screen.

### **The High Altar (5)**

The High Altar is of Early English design with a wooden Reredos. The centre panel of the Reredos represents the Crucifixion. Above the High Altar is the previously mentioned hanging Pyx and Tester. The shields on the Tester represent the twelve tribes of Israel.



### **The North Aisle (6)**

To reach here you will have passed through a Comper screen in its original place which surrounded the Jesus Chapel in the original north aisle. Looking east is the New Altar and, on the wall, a Comper designed Reredos which was originally in another church but installed here in 1989. The window above the New Altar was repositioned from the Jesus Chapel. The Tester was designed by Walter Tapper, an assistant of Comper, for a now demolished church.

The windows on the north wall were all repositioned from the original north aisle. The statue of St George on the north wall is the work of Comper and the one of St Hilda on the west wall is a reminder of the Chapel of St Hilda in Bessacarr, whose sale helped finance the 1989 extension.

## The Tower and Organ (7)

The tower was built in the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and contains three bells. The tenor is dated 1610. Beneath the tower, now inaccessible, is the Childers family vault. The organ was installed in 1905, the original intention being to decorate the case but this has never happened. Adjacent to the organ is a record of Rectors and Vicars from 1218. Church records are held which cover the period from then to the present day.

Externally on the south side of the church is the War Memorial. The lych-gate was erected in 1905. The original rectory, known as Cantley Manor, stood across from Church Lane on what has now become the Cantley Manor development.

If you are interested in further information, there is a more comprehensive “Guide and History of St Wilfrid’s Church” for which we request a small donation to church funds. Please also feel free to speak to any member of the PCC who will be very pleased to help you.

**We hope you enjoyed your visit.  
Please sign the Visitors’ Book before you leave.**

### Sunday Services

8.00 am	Mass
10.00 am	Parish Mass
6.30 pm	Mass

### Parish Priest:

The Reverend Canon John Willett  
St Wilfrid’s Vicarage, 200 Cantley Lane,  
Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN4 6PA  
Telephone: 01302 535133

**Website: [www.stwilfridscantley.co.uk](http://www.stwilfridscantley.co.uk)**



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