

Churchyard

On the south side of the churchyard is a fine old yew tree, nearby is a tombstone carved with a Pieta by J Cribb, pupil and associate of Eric Gill, 1927.

To the right of the footpath from the north gate is the impressive box tomb of James Bradley (died 1829 aged 90), who was a leading local farmer at the end of the eighteenth century.



The dedication

St Giles, Patron Saint of beggars and cripples, and of forests, was a rich youth who gave up all to live in a cave by the river Rhone. Legend says he kept a tame hind. King Childebert's huntsmen shot at it, but the arrow lodged in the hermit's shoulder. The King was smitten with remorse and founded an abbey on the spot, making Giles its first abbot. About 150 churches in England are dedicated to him, notably Cripplegate in London. Feast Day 1st September.

Welcome to St Giles' Church Cromwell

Cromwell is a very ancient settlement – sites of a Bronze Age round barrow, and a Roman villa and bridge attest this.

The name (original pronunciation Crummell) derived from the Old English Crum – a crook or bend, and welle – a stream; so it means “near the bend in the river”.

The church stands on ground that has been hallowed for over 1000 years. Originally there would have been a wooden structure, replaced some time around the Norman Conquest by one of stone.

Some herringbone masonry exists, hidden behind plaster in the north wall of the Nave. The earliest visible work is the south doorway and the south aisle arcade. There are also two late 13th century lancet windows in the north wall of the chancel.

The south chancel arcade is 14th century, as is the east window and a particularly “flamboyant” window to the south side of the High Altar, one of the best examples of its type in Nottinghamshire.

About 1430 the tower was added, built of squared ‘skerry’ (Tuxford stone). There are three bells, one



from around 1520 bearing the inscription ‘sca Egidi’ which means St Giles.

Many other alterations were made in the 300 years since the Reformation, and by the 19th century a thorough restoration was needed. Much of the present appearance of the church, especially in the chancel, is due to the restoration of 1873.

The 20th century saw the addition of a vestry built onto the north side of the chancel in 1912, electric lighting, heating and power to the organ, the Lady Altar and various High Church objects of piety, sanctuary gates, and sets of hymn and prayer books.



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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 Elizabeth Jones for her help producing this leaflet.

The interior of the church is small and simple with a south aisle and a south chancel aisle. The nave arcade consists of three arches dating from the mid-13th century.

2 Stained Glass

Little remains of the stained glass that was originally in the church. The County Records 1732 state '... a Lunatick or Mad Woman hath committed great Disorders in the sd Towne of Cromwell, particularly in breaking the Windows of the Church and Chancel there ...'.

The window behind the font represents the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan. It was put in in 1875 by the school fellows and friends of Ida Knox. Two tall late 13th century windows on the north side of the chancel contain in the upper part all that remains of 14th and 15th century armorial glass. These fragments include a shield with the arms of Vipont - a Westmorland family one of whom married a younger son of the Lord of the Manor of Cromwell in 1302.



4 Window Stonework

The 5-light East window is a reconstruction of a 14th century original, whose tracery was lost in the 18th century. The window, south of the altar shows a flame-like design typical of "curvilinear" style, dating from the mid 14th century. The stained glass in the central lancet commemorates Guy Hemmingway of Cromwell, the local historian, who died in 1983.

6 Sacristy

A 14th century sacristy adjoined the Chancel, with access through the ogee-headed door which you see partially covered by the Sanctuary steps. The foot of the doorway reached to ground level, as the steps are a 19th century 'improvement'. On the outside of the wall is a blocked aumbry, proving the existence of the Sacristy, which was not a common feature of churches in the Middle Ages.

3 Priest's Doorway

Between the two tall windows in the chancel, a tall doorway leads to the vestry. The Priest's Door was used prior to 1710, as the Rectory stood to the north of the Church. This building no longer exists and the Dower House built to the south of the Church around 1680 became the Rectory, so the north door became disused.



8 First Female Churchwarden

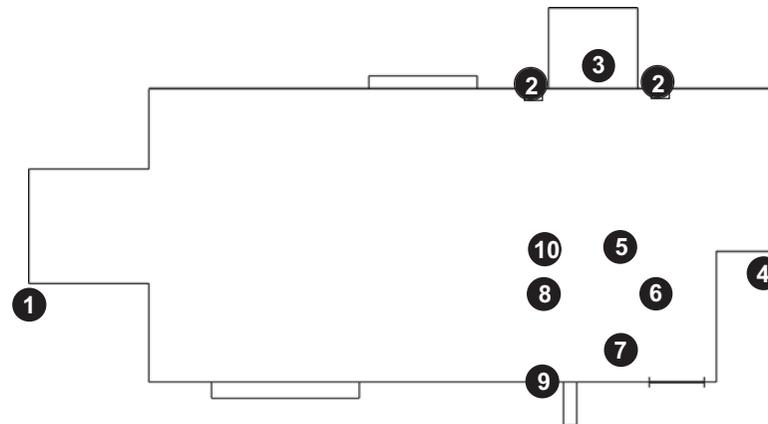
At the south side of the entrance to the chancel hangs a photograph of Frances Smith who was reputed to be the first female church warden in England (died 1906).

5 The organ

The organ was bought from Cuthbert of Hull, for £56, and installed at the completion of the 1873 restoration.

Behind the organ can be seen wall tablets commemorating three generations of Fynes (or Fiennes) – Clinton rectors spanning the years 1789-1911 – average 40 years each!

They were related to the Dukes of Newcastle, Lords of the Manor and Patrons of the Living, who were descended from the Holles family, who had acquired the Lordship of Cromwell. They took their name (de Cromwell) from the village. A long line of Ralphs culminated in Ralph, Lord Cromwell, born c1393. After his death all connection of the Cromwell family with the village was ended.



1 The Exterior

The tower is distinctive and unlike any other in the area. The stair turret is oddly placed, displacing the northern belfry window slightly. Seven hefty gargoyles can be seen leaning from the battlemented top; an eighth, split in two, on the outside of the vestry. In the wall to the east of this can be seen the former aumbry and the ogee-headed doorway.

7 Chancel South Aisle

The chancel aisle was rebuilt in 1873, when the two 14th century arches were found hidden in what was then an outside wall, pointing to the existence of a Chantry Chapel, destroyed at the Reformation. This now became the vestry and organ 'loft'.

9 Memorial

The photographs commemorate the ten Paratroopers who were drowned in a tragic accident at Cromwell weir in 1975. There is no war memorial as no one from the village was killed in either the First or the Second World War.

10 Wrought iron screen and gates

Made by the village blacksmith in 1888.

