

## St Lawrence and the Heads on the Chancel Arch corbels

The church is dedicated to St Lawrence who was a deacon in Rome and martyr of the time of Sixtus II. During the Valerian persecution Lawrence was commanded to reveal the treasures of the church. But instead of showing any gold or silver, he collected the poor and the sick and presented them as the treasures that secured heaven.

The officials were furious and are said to have had Lawrence roasted alive on a gridiron, AD 258.

It is claimed that the heads at either side chancel arch are depicting those that St Lawrence collected as the treasures of the church: the blind, deaf and dumb.

However, an alternative explanation given in the Southwell Diocesan Magazine of May 1929



states those '...on the north side [are] representing the powers of evil; while on the south side the figure is engaged in biting his thumbs, ie the ancient way of showing contempt for the Devil and all his ways.'

The earliest reference to the church at Gotham

being dedicated to St Lawrence is in *Thesaurus Rerum Ecclesiasticarum* of 1742. Perhaps it is no coincidence that an elder brother of the second recorded rector of the church, Saher de St Andrew, was named Lawrence.

# Welcome to St Lawrence's Church Gotham

The first intimation of a church at Gotham is the gift of tithes made to the monastery of St Mary in the Meadows, Leicester. It is recorded in a charter of Henry II to the monastery dated between 1155-62. It can therefore be said that an early form of the present church at Gotham would have been in existence before 1150.

Construction of a south aisle took place towards the latter end of the Norman period, with the four rounded pillars typically Norman Transitional period, c.1200. The construction of the

north aisle with octagonal pillars was begun shortly after 1300, together with the north and south porches, and the tower with its broach spire.

The chancel has north and south windows in the decorated style and was built shortly after. The clerestory is Perpendicular and was probably built between 1425-1475.

Parts of the church have been repaired or replaced over the centuries, the spire and roof suffering damage from inclement weather. In the 18th century the widow of the



recently deceased rector, John Lightfoot, was charged with the cost of repairing the chancel which was partially rebuilt and shortened. Recently the outside fabric of the church has been renovated and the lower parts of the church walls have now been rendered to protect the stonework.

A further major renovation took place in 2010. This was directed at the interior of the church, to make it more accessible. The plinths and pews were removed and new oak flooring was put in with under floor heating and wooden framed upholstered chairs instead of pews. A new toilet was built in the NW corner along with a servery. This makes the church more comfortable and flexible. The chancel remains the same and helps retain the traditional feel.



The University of  
Nottingham

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 Barry Alexander and Barry Dabell for their extensive research.



## 1 West Entrance Porch

Once an enclosed bell ringing chamber and known to house a Sunday school room in 1887. In 1979 a new ringing floor was put in above the porch. The new entrance door was made in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The engraved glass side panels are in memory of Grace Mary Forrest, organist of the church for 40 years, who died in December 1977.

## 16 Font

Late 14<sup>th</sup> century but probably re-tooled in the Victorian era. Tradition places the font near to the door to signify entry into the church through Baptism.



## 15 Finny Window

In memory of Henry Maturin Finny (Curate) who died in 1865 after visiting a child with fever, leaving his newborn son and widow. The son, William Evelyn St Lawrence Finny, grew up to take Medical degrees in Ireland and then moved to London. He joined the Kingston-on-Thames Town Council and in 1898 became Mayor, a post he held on six occasions. His hobbies included preserving old buildings and designing stained glass windows. In 1932 he commissioned a replica of the glass window that had been in the original Curates house as a gift to the church. It can be seen at the west end of the church.

## 2 Bells & Clock

There are five bells, two dating from 1598, one added in 1658, and the other two in 1910. The clock mechanism is in the spire above the bells. The current clock dates from 1898.

## 3 Vestry

Formerly this was the main entrance together with the south porch until the door was made in the tower at the west end.

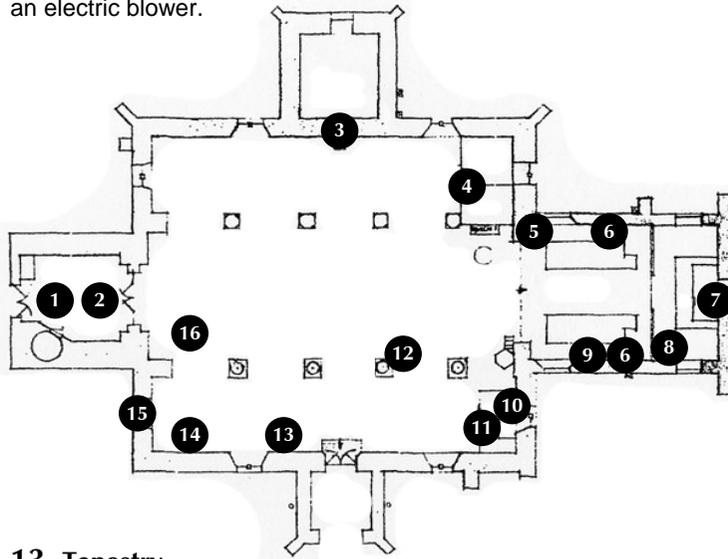


## 14 Borrows Monuments

John Borrow was High Sherriff of Derby. Note the unusual arms with the shield of Minerva.

## 4 Organ

The first organ was dedicated to Earl Howe, patron, in 1870 and would have been hand-pumped. The current organ was built in 1953 by Messrs E Wragg of Nottingham. It is a modern two manual with an electric blower.



## 13 Tapestry

Sewn to mark the millennium, it depicts a village map and 36 scenes and events, past and present in the village history. For example the first one shows the 'Curate's House' mentioned in the memorial window to Henry Maturin Finny. The last one is the Wesleyan Chapel that closed down in the 1960s.



## 5 Foxcroft Memorials

John Foxcroft (Rector 1619 – 1662) became a prominent member of Nottingham Presbytery during the Commonwealth and was a leading puritan.



## 7 East Window

Donated by the children of Henry Vaughan (Rector 1836-1881) in memory of their parents and as a thanksgiving for peace after WWI.

## 8 Wooden Chests

Once used to store vestments and silver. The oldest of these dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

## 6 Monuments of the Saint Andrews

The 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> century monuments both sides of the chancel are to the Saint Andrews family who resided here for 350 years, probably in Rushcliffe Hall. (Now just the 14<sup>th</sup> green on the golf course).



## 9 The Wodehouse Memorials

The Revd Frederick Armine Wodehouse (1882-1915) was a relative of the author P G Wodehouse. He had a daughter and three sons whilst living in the Gotham rectory. As the three monuments to each son shows, all of them died in tragic circumstances whilst serving their country. Arthur, a Captain in the Army was killed in WW1 in Mesopotamia (Iraq) in 1915 aged 34, son Frederick, a Professor of History in Agra (India) died of disease in 1912 aged 28, and son Norman, a Rear Admiral in the Navy, and formerly a successful Captain in the England Rugby team, was killed in 1941 aged 54, whilst serving as a Commodore RNR in the South Atlantic of Convoy OB337.

## 11 Altar Frontal on the South Aisle Altar

Embroidered by Hilary Tinley with poppies and corn to emphasise the memorial to the fallen and the faith in resurrection to new life. Paid for by a bequest of Emily Pearson.

## 10 War Memorial Reredos

This oak memorial is behind the south aisle altar and was originally in memory of those who died during WWI, and later the names were added of those who died in WWII.