

## Summary Timeline of Holy Trinity Church, Ratcliffe-on-Soar

1075-1086	Chancel built and stone altar provided.	1536	Dissolution of the Priors and Ratcliffe become a manorial church.	(Boarding removed after a short while.)
1135	Church acquired by Priory of Norton, Cheshire	1571	The altar stone was buried.	1936 Modern font, a gift from Kingston, installed near the door.
c1215	Nave and tower commenced. Dedicated to St Mary.	1595	Wooden altar table provided.	1973 Tombs restored & renovated.
c1290	North and south aisle added. Tower built and chancel extended.	c1600	Original bells replaced by two Henry Oldfield bells.	1979 Chairs in church replaced by pews from a redundant Roman Catholic church in Leicester.
c1315	Porch doorway added; windows of south aisle and chancel east window built; some remodeling of the south aisle and arcades; font provided.	1633	Sanctuary rails and font cover installed.	1982 Old wooden church gates replaced by cast iron gates purchased from church at Cotgrave; gate pillars rebuilt.
c1460	Walls over the aisle arcades raised to give the nave a higher look; possibly at the same time, high pitch roof replaced with a flatter roof.	1633	Communion chalice and paten presented.	1990 Extensive pointing and repairs to church spire; weather cock repaired and renovated; roof and other timbers treated for beetle and rot.
1550	The stone altar was ordered to be replaced by an "honest table".	1760	North aisle, including the clerestory, rebuilt.	2006-2011 Extensive repairs, new drains and replastering carried out by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB).
1553	Two bells given to church by commissioner of church goods.	1783	Treble bell installed, made by Hedderly of Nottingham.	
		c1835	Church rededicated to the Holy Trinity.	
		1886	Major restoration of the church, paid for by Earl Howe at a cost of £830.	
		1891	Altar stone restored and reconsecrated.	
		1924	Church boarded off inside to reduce its size for services.	



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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 Ray State and John Allen for their extensive research, and to H. H. Collins for use of his material.

*Welcome to*

# Holy Trinity Church Ratcliffe-on-Soar

There has long been a settlement at Ratcliffe. Iron Age and Bronze Age remains are to be found in the area and Roman remains have been found at Redhill, near the confluence of the rivers Soar and Trent. It seems likely that a temple to Jupiter once stood there.

A Christian church existed in Ratcliffe at Domesday in 1086. This was dedicated by Wulfstan II Bishop of Worcester circa 1080 when the stone altar was installed. Together with a water mill and six acres of

meadow, the village was valued at ten shillings in the early 12th century. Some possible traces of both the mill and an earlier church (possibly Saxon) have recently been discovered and await further investigation.

Ratcliffe church at one time was the mother church of the area, which indicates its importance astride the main crossing of the River Soar.

In time the transport arteries found more convenient crossing places



*Holy Trinity church is home to the famous Sacheverell tombs...*

and the church's status declined. However, in its heyday it was the subject of much dispute over the patronage.

Although the population of Ratcliffe-on-Soar is smaller now than in the Middle Ages, worship is still carried on much as it has been over the nine hundred or more years that this church has stood.



## 1 Font

The church has two fountains, one is modern, a gift from Kingston on Soar in 1936, the other is contemporary with the building.



## 2 Organ

The organ is likely to date from before 1860, and it appears to have survived with little alteration since that time. It was purchased in 1936 from Kingston on Soar. The church paid £14 after a house to house collection and £15 later in the year. It was originally hand pumped at the salary of 15 shillings per year. An electric blower was fitted in 1946.



## 3 Corbels

The corbels on the walls of the chancel are the remaining evidence of the original 13th century roof. See if you can find another corbel, this one carved with a face, in the north aisle.

## 4 Sacheverall tombs

A feature that catches the eye here in Holy Trinity church is the fine set of alabaster effigies on the altar tombs. They are among the best surviving examples of this characteristic Nottinghamshire craft. The tombs commemorate the four successors of the Sacheverall family, Lords of the Manor in the early 16th century to the middle of the 17th century.

The oldest and finest of the tombs stands under the canopy in the wall of the north aisle (4a) and

commemorates Randolfus Sacheverall who died in 1539. He is shown in full plate armour with his first wife, Cecily.

In the chancel (4b), is the tomb of his son Henry, who died in 1558. Like his father, he is clad in full plate armour though lighter and less elegant. His first wife Lucy, lies in a heavy cloak and her dress is not arranged in folds but stands stiffly out from her feet indicating the approaching fashion of wearing a farthingale, so much affected by ladies of Elizabethan times.

Also in the chancel (4c) is the tomb of the second Henry who died in 1580. He is clad in half armour. His wife Jane lies on a heavy cloak and wears a voluminous gown. The small ruff collar as worn by her mother-in-law has now



swelled out into a full Elizabethan ruff standing out three or four inches round her chin.

(4d) The tomb of the last Henry shows an effigy little different from that of his father. He alone occupies the tomb chest, which also shows two babies in swaddling clothes and his daughter. Above the tomb a flamboyant canopy frames his three wives, kneeling at small prayer desks, one behind the other.

## 8 Churchyard

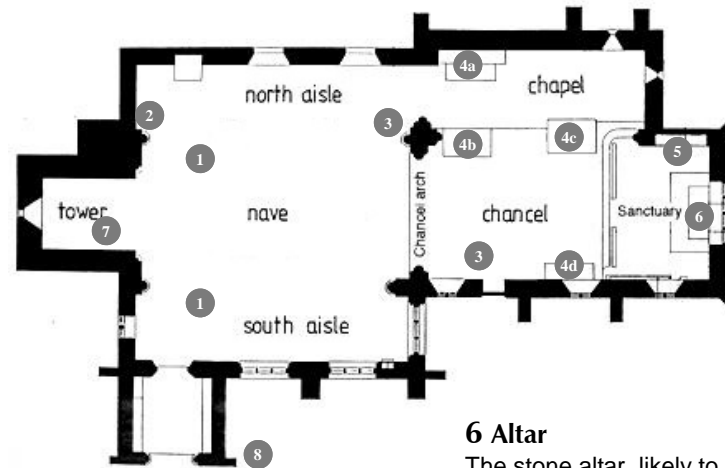
Many of the gravestones are assembled in groupings of close relatives as in other churchyards. Some bear verses that give a brief biography of the dead. Look out for that of Robert Smith (died 1782) and that of Abigail Woolley (died 1804):

*Fair natures image snatch'd in haste away.  
An angel yester and a corps today  
And yet an angel with a mind serene  
A form superior with most precious mien  
But now no more: she fled one heart to rend  
A faithful lover and a cheerful friend.*

Another headstone, of the Bosworth family, situated to the right hand of the path leading to the church

door, highlights the fragility of life nearly three centuries ago: Thomas Bosworth, it records, outlived eight of his children.

Another group of gravestones is of the Chamberlin family who owned Redhill Farm. John Chamberlin became the High Sheriff of Nottingham in 1789. Israel Chamberlin was unfortunate in being poisoned in 1839 by his housekeeper who instead of his medicine mistakenly gave him a lethal dose of opium. The fate of the housekeeper is currently unrecorded.



## 7 Bells

There are three bells now in the tower but they are of irregular interval (about a semitone between tenor and second and a tone and a half between second and treble), so when chimed together they do not sound especially musical.

## 6 Altar

The stone altar, likely to be some 900 years old, bears the marks consistent with those specified by Lanfranc the first Norman Archbishop of Canterbury. In the mid 16th century the Archbishop of York ordered that all altar stones should be "broken, defaced or bestowed to common use". Ratcliffe took no action but, in 1571, attempts to break the stone only resulted in chipped edges so it was let into the floor. With no altar the villagers complained to the Bishop until, in 1595, the current wooden altar was provided. In 1891 the altar stone was restored and reconsecrated and the chipped edges repaired. The stone displays one of the Lanfranc crosses on the far left hand corner the others having been destroyed and also the Norman chamfered undercut.

## 5 Sepulchre

On the north side of the chancel is low level arch known as a Sepulchre where, between about 1100 and 1559, sacred items such as a crucifix would be ceremoniously deposited every Good Friday and taken out again every Easter Day to symbolise Christ's entombment and resurrection.

There is an ancient, possibly 13th century, stone coffin placed here now that was recovered from the churchyard.