

The Dovecote

In the field to the east of the church once lay a complex series of earthworks – a moat and former fishponds-associated with the buildings of the collegiate church. There is also a spectacular example of a circular dovecote, now a scheduled ancient monument, dating from the 13th or 14th century. This is the largest of its kind in Nottinghamshire and is approximately 9 metres in diameter by 20 metres in height. It contains 1260 nesting boxes, and also belonged to the church college.

At the end of the churchyard facing the dovecote is an example of a 'ha ha', a low, sunken wall designed to allow an uninterrupted view across to the dovecote whilst preventing livestock from entering the churchyard. There is a splendid series of yew trees here.



Welcome to St Peter's Church Sibthorpe

A church at Sibthorpe, existed at the time of the Domesday survey in 1086, but nothing now remains of this early building.

The earliest fabric is found in the simple, west tower, built of rubble stone, and erected in the 13th century. Although the core of the nave may have fabric of similar date, it was much restored and partially reconstructed in the 17th century, an unusual time for such work due to all the political and religious upheaval in that century. During these works the former south aisle was demolished, although the evidence of its former existence may be seen in the blocked arcades in the

exterior north wall. The windows in this wall date from the 14th century and were once located in the now vanished aisle. The south nave wall now has simple 18th century windows which contrast with the delightful and complex medieval work elsewhere.

The chancel dates from the 14th century and has a beautiful east window and an Easter Sepulchre both dating from that period. The richness of the work from this period may be explained by the fact that a College of Chantry Priests was founded here in 1324 by Thomas de Sibthorpe with chantries dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and St Anne, and later to the



Blessed Virgin, St John the Baptist and St Thomas the Martyr. The college was suppressed by Henry VIII in 1540.

In 1853 the church was found to be in need of repair, and a thorough restoration was undertaken. In that year the church records show that 14 shillings were paid for coals to dry out the church.

According to a minute book of 1910 there was an argument with the vicar about the continual changing of the service. The vicar refused to put a motion to the meeting and three people, including the churchwardens, walked out.

Between 1985 and 1988 a great deal of repair was carried out. The present wooden floor dates from 1991 when the Victorian quarry tiles were removed.



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 Jean and Richard Ward for their extensive research and to Dr Chris Brooke for editing and photographs



1 Font

The font has a chamfered octagonal base and a tapered stem with panel at foot inscribed "W 1662". The bowl has strapwork panels and a moulded edge. It is a fine example of a 'restoration' font, placed here after the end of the Commonwealth period has ended.



6 Former north aisle

Evidence for the former north aisle may be seen on the exterior in the form of a blocked arcade. The 14th century aisle windows have been re-inserted in the blocking.

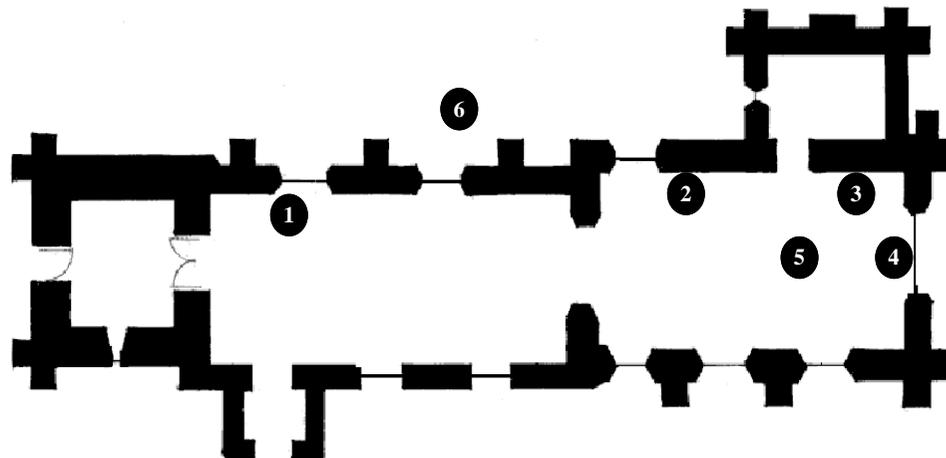
3 Easter Sepulchre

In the north wall of the chancel is a fine example of an Easter Sepulchre where the sacrament would be kept during the Easter rites.

It comprises a low tomb recess, above which is a small niche under an ogee arch, either side of which are two small panels containing figures of sleeping Roman soldiers.

The crocketed gabel above the central niche has a figure of Christ, blessing with his right hand and holding a cross staff with banner in his left. Below him are two angels holding censers and at the lower corners are half-figures with folded hands.

The painting is not ancient, but fragments of medieval paint may still remain.



2 Edward Burnell monument

In the chancel is a large alabaster monument depicting a full size figure in civilian dress.

Inscriptions read: *Edward Burnell gt [gent] departed this present world the xix of December in the year of our lord 1589, and, Made anno dni 1590 by me Barbara Burnell.* The Burnell family were formerly prominent in several parts of Nottinghamshire. The construction of the monument is attributed to Roiley of Chellaston, Derbyshire.



5 Chancel

The founding of a college of priests here in 1334 brought with it the construction of the chancel in the most exciting manner for the period. The walls have large windows with flowing tracery in the style of Lincolnshire churches, and the chancel arch is adorned with stunning carvings of foliage. Hidden since the 18th century above the ceiling, the tip of the chancel arch bears traces of rich painted decoration.

4 Glass
The church contains no ancient glass, but the centre light of the east window has late 19th century stained glass dedicated to Richard de Sibthorpe, the Good Parson of Beckingham.

