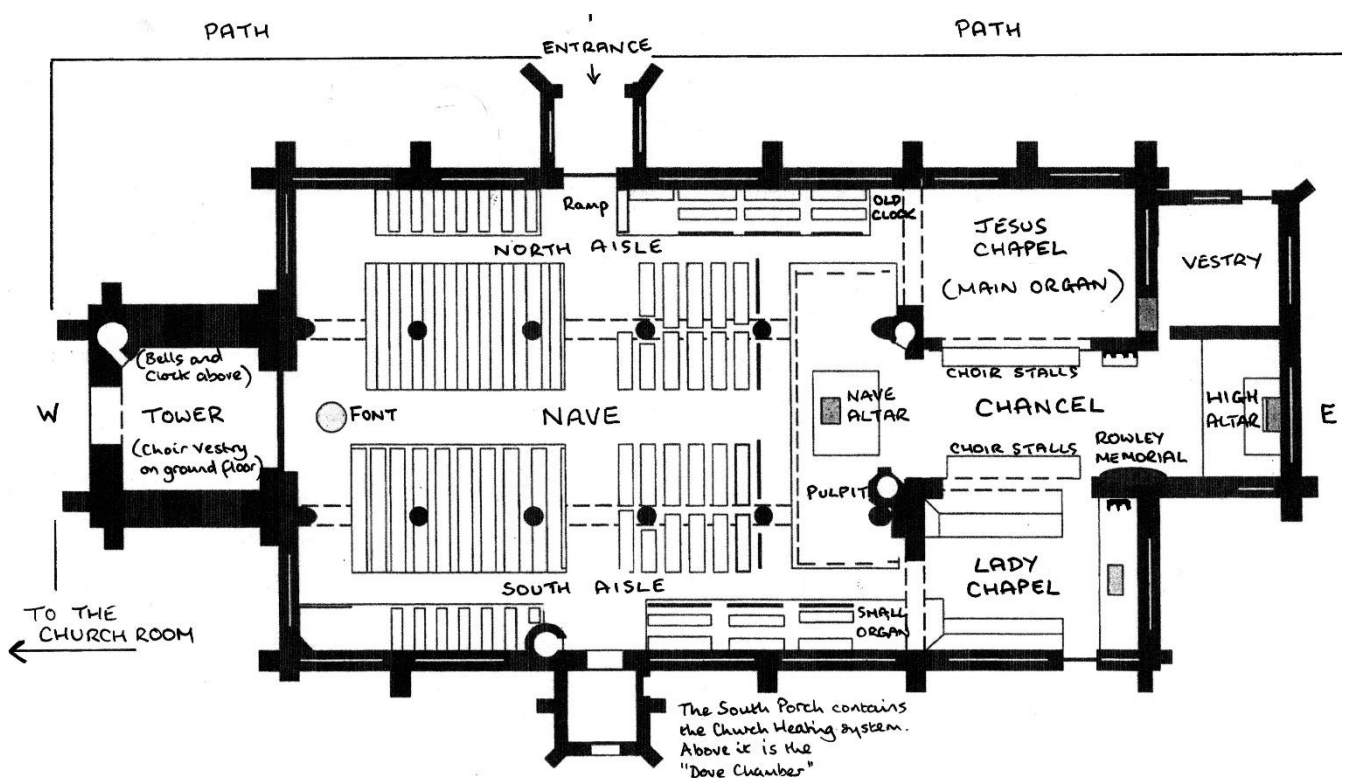


# St Neots Parish Church (St Mary the Virgin): a Guide on a Page

## How old is the church?

- We don't know when there was first a church here.
- The oldest parts of this building are at the east end: some walls, a blocked window, and a doorway from the late 12<sup>th</sup> century.
- Most parts of the building you see – the tall pillars, the outer walls, the carved wooden ceilings, the eastern wooden screens, the porches – date from the 15<sup>th</sup> century.
- The tower (130 feet / 39.6 metres) followed all this, and was completed in 1530.
- The small altar in the Lady Chapel dates from about 1600.
- The main pews date from 1847, and the main organ from 1855 (restored 3 times).
- The wonderful stained-glass windows are mostly a planned sequence telling the story of the life of Jesus, and were installed between 1859 and 1904.



## What else is there to see?

- A very rough but ancient font, that may be as old as the church itself.
- A spectacular tomb in medieval style in memory of members of the Rowley family, installed in the chancel in 1893.
- Carved figures of 8 of Jesus' disciples holding up the chancel ceiling!
- Many angels, and various animals, carved into the roofs of all parts of the church.
- The early 18<sup>th</sup> century tower clock mechanism in the North Aisle (replaced in 1919).
- An 18<sup>th</sup> century coat of arms, over the south doorway.
- A 19<sup>th</sup> century pulpit, with figures of Peter, Paul, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
- A model of the church made by Polish refugee toymaker Roman Hoenigsman in 1957.

**Much more information about all these things (and things that are out of view) can be found in the 'brief history and guide' booklet (which, like this leaflet, is free of charge).**