



About the Church

The first church on this site was probably founded in the 11th century. It appears to have had small Norman windows on the south side and an aisle on the north. Early in the 18th century a west gallery was introduced, together with box pews. In 1816 the church was in poor condition being both dark and too small but the arrival of a benefactor, Mr. Barry, and a donation of £150 from The Incorporated Church Building Society allowed a new church to be built at a cost of £886 and opened in 1822. The church is little changed from this time.

This building was replaced in 1870 by the new St. Stephen's nearer to Robin Hood's Bay. After serving as a mortuary chapel for many years the church was repaired and services were resumed in 1917. Further repairs were carried out in 1943 but storm damage to both churches precipitated the decision to vest the old church in the care of The Churches Conservation Trust in 1986.

The churchyard, also vested, records the hard life of the inhabitants of this part of the North East coast, many of whom made their living from the sea. A few moments spent will reveal several generations of the same family who lived and died on harsh seas – they are remembered on the evocative 18th and 19th century grave stones.

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We've saved over 340 beautiful buildings which attract more than a million visitors a year. With our help and with your support they are kept open and in use – living once again at the heart of their communities.



Access

Due to their age, historic church floors can be uneven and worn and lighting can be low level. Please take care, especially in wet weather when floors can be slippery.

Help us do more

To protect these churches, and others like them, we need your help. If you enjoy your visit please give generously or if you would like to become a CCT supporter and join in our exclusive 'behind-the-scenes' visits please go to our website.



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CONSERVATION TRUST

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Old Church of St Stephen

Fylingdales, North Yorkshire



THE CHURCHES
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The historic Old Church of St Stephen

10 things to see before you leave...

1 The Three-decker Pulpit dominates the church with the clerk's desk at the front and the reading desk behind. The pulpit is complimented by a semi-octagonal tester to increase the volume of the speaker's voice. A very similar pulpit can be found at another Trust church 25 miles up the coast at All Saints Old Church, Skelton-in-Cleveland.

2 Maiden's Garlands were formerly hung from the chancel ceiling. Made from up to 100 feet (30.5m) of ribbon, they were carried at the funeral procession of a maiden. The garlands date from the 19th century.

3 The Font is a 17th century survivor of the 'old' church. An odd goblet-like octagonal font with a cover of eight spindles. The original Norman font was found buried in a field in 1895 and is now in the 'new' St. Stephen's church down the hill towards the sea.

4 The Benefaction Boards on the west wall are painted in white lettering and probably date from the last major rebuilding in 1820 but record the generosity of benefactors between 1708 and 1847.

5 The Gallery and Organ are supported on Tuscan columns and the L-shaped gallery is accessed by stone steps. At the eastern-most end of the north gallery, next to the chancel arch is a private pew complete with green baize decoration. The rest of the gallery is plain with mahogany cappings. The organ has gilded dummy front pipes.

6 The Royal Arms, painted on wood, are of George IV dated 1822.

7 The Farsyde Hatchment is an example of a diamond-shaped heraldic panel that would accompany the funeral procession of the nobility or gentry. A hatchment would usually remain in the church although on some occasions would return to the house of the deceased following the service and hung above the door for a period of mourning before being permanently placed above the tomb.

The Farsyde family were local gentry – their family pew can be seen on the south side of the church under Item 9.

8 The Commandment Tables date from the rebuilding of the church in 1822.

9 The Robin Hood's Bay Lifeboat board highlights the relationship between the congregation of Old St Stephen's and the sea. It lists the services rendered by the brave lifeboat men on 25 occasions between 1893 and 1929.

10 The Box Pews are individually numbered and would be used by a family or individuals who would pay an annual fee for its use. Many parish churches possessed similar box pews although these were generally replaced during the 19th century.

