



THE CHURCHES  
CONSERVATION TRUST



# CHURCH OF ST PETER

Marefair,  
Northampton



THE CHURCHES  
CONSERVATION TRUST

1 West Smithfield London EC1A 9EE

Tel: 020 7213 0660 Fax: 020 7213 0678 Email: [central@tcct.org.uk](mailto:central@tcct.org.uk)

[www.visitchurches.org.uk](http://www.visitchurches.org.uk) Registered Charity No. 258612 Spring 2007

£3.00

*Marefair, Northampton*

# CHURCH OF ST PETER

*by Paul Woodfield (Architect and historic building consultant)*



## INTRODUCTION

St Peter's church stands on the southern side of Marefair, just west of the centre of Northampton. It was described by Sir Nikolaus Pevsner as 'the most interesting Norman church in Northamptonshire', a county well blessed with fine early medieval churches.

## HISTORY

Northampton was one of the great towns of early England. Its rapid rise to prosperity was due to a number of factors: its location on the River Nene (with trading potential to the east coast and beyond), astride the Jurassic Way (an early roadway), and in an area known early on for the quality of its wool and the rise in the number of cloth weavers, its good pasturage and leatherworking. The town had tripled its value between the Domesday Survey and 1130, a remarkable achievement.

The town first appears as a settlement of Mercia under King Offa, before AD800. It was probably the successor to the Roman small town of Duston, 1¼ miles (2.8km) to the west. Northampton developed on its present site on a ridge of elevated sandstone on the north bank of the Nene and is thus defensible on the south and west. The place-name first appears in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in 913 after the settlement had become a *vil* (a town with a royal palace) where men rendered their dues to their overlord or Jarl.

*Front cover: The chancel (C Knowles)*

*Left: Interior looking west in the early 19th century by J H Le Keux (Northamptonshire Record Office)*



Left: Exterior from the north-west (Bennie Historic Conservation)

Right: Saxon grave slab (C Knowles)



The end of hostilities between Wessex and the settled Danes in c.886, established the Danelaw with a boundary on or just west of Watling Street. It left Northampton as the Danish centre of administration. In Britain there were two administrative areas called *Hamtunscir*, probably derived from the Old English *Hamm* (river bend). The prefix 'North' was added some time after 1086 and 'South' to the other, a town (Southampton) already in existence before the mid-8th century.

Immediately east of St Peter's church a series of substantial Anglo-Saxon buildings were found by excavation in 1980–82. These have been interpreted as royal residences or palaces, one of which, a three-bay building already in existence by 820, was almost as long as the church itself excluding the tower. This timber building was replaced in stone well before 875

by a building of similar size with a great hall 9 m wide. Some of these early buildings may be small churches set in line, as at St Augustine's Canterbury, or Repton – an interesting Anglo-Saxon phenomenon.

Edward the Elder, son of Alfred the Great and King of Wessex, fought back the Danes of Northampton at Towcester in 921, working his way eastward and fortifying towns for the first time since the Roman period, as *burhs*. The expanding Kingdom of Wessex needed new centres in which to strike its coinage, and Northampton became a mint under Eadwig in about 955–59. The church took an active part at this time, setting up administrative units or *parochia*, later termed minsters. It is not clear whether the early church on the site of St Peter's functioned as a minster in the 10th century, but a stone building, interpreted as a

church with a square east end, 6 m wide, had existed on the same site since before 800 and had probably served the royal household. In the time of Edward the Confessor (1042–66) a priest named Bruning was in charge of St Peter's, and also presided over a number of other churches in the royal estate. This early, pre-Danish ecclesiastical organisation seems to have survived until the 20th century: the chapelries at Kingsthorpe and Upton, royal manors at the time of Domesday, were still dependencies of St Peter's until 1850 and 1980 respectively.

A story is told of one of Bruning's assistant priests, a Norwegian, who was desperate to make the pilgrimage to Rome, but was turned back by repeated visions of an elderly man. Once back at St Peter's the vision again appeared and showed him the burial site of a forgotten saint, St Ragner, nephew of St Edmund of East Anglia, slain by the Danes in 870. After many miracles wrought at the church, Edward the Confessor, a pious man, had a great shrine decorated with gold, silver and precious stones erected for him here.

Sadly, nothing of this great shrine has survived. But what does remain is the remarkable grave slab, now upended at the end of the south aisle, cut down by 3 cm on one side. This could be the cover of St Ragner's tomb as the carving is dated to the 10th–11th century, and has beasts and birds entwined in vigorous scrolling foliage. It is one of the earliest carved stones in Northampton. Another carved stone, a

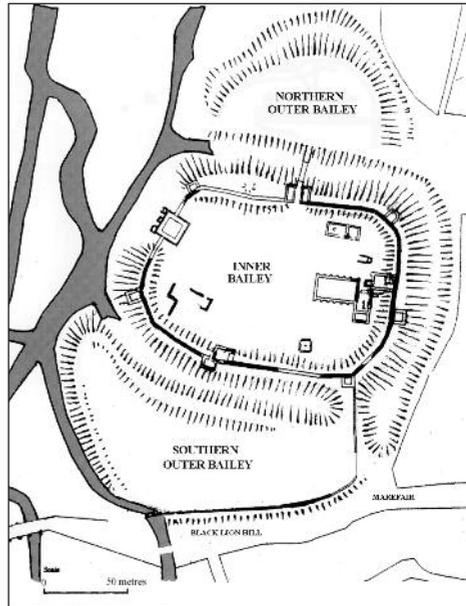
substantial cross shaft with knotwork panels and corded corners, was found during one of the 18th or 19th-century restorations and now lies in the arched tomb recess in the south aisle wall. This was reused in the Norman building and had a carved half-column base cut on the back. It probably came from the partly demolished western bay of the church. This and another similar stone, much weathered and abraded, are of the 9th–10th century and demonstrate the continuity of a religious presence on this site.

The Norman Conquest of 1066 was not such a great change as is often implied; it was in practice largely a change of overlordship. Count Waltheof, Earl of Huntingdon and Lord of Northampton in the late Anglo-Saxon period, married Judith, great-niece of William the Conqueror; and their eldest offspring, Matilda, married Simon de Senlis I in 1089.

The building of the great castle on the western defences of the Saxon town, overlooking the confluence and fording place of the rivers, involved drastic clearing of houses and properties. It was originally a ringwork, an early type of earthen stronghold like a motte and bailey castle but without the motte. Simon's later rebuilding in stone included a huge rectangular buttressed aisled hall, estimated at 27m x 15m, a size comparable only with contemporary halls erected by the king or the greatest bishops. Under the outer walls, to the south-east, lay the long-established and venerable site of St Peter's, on Gold Street, or Marefair, the major road from the west to the town centre. Although a great castle would normally have had its own internal chapel, its closeness suggests strongly an association between secular and ecclesiastical authority, and it is even possible that the castle was originally located here not only for strategic purposes but also to benefit from the already-established authority and presence of the church.

So, who refounded and built the present St Peter's church, and for what purpose, as the town already had three big churches and a large priory? It seems clear that it was one of the Simons de Senlis.

Simon I de Senlis (St Lys) came from the great Romano-Gaulish city of *Augustomagus*, some 15 miles (24 km) north of Paris, favoured by the Capétians as a *Cité Royale*, and renowned today for its standing Roman walls. His was a



powerful family, holding the formal position of administrator of the royal vineyards as early as 987. Once in possession of the English estates, Simon I set about building castles at Northampton and Fotheringhay. In Northampton he enclosed the town with defences and, confirming it as a legally formed borough, founded another church, Holy Sepulchre, by 1109–10 as an act of personal devotion on his return from pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He died c.1110. He also founded, and presumably built for the new borough, All Saints – a large Norman church; its successor was sadly destroyed in the 1675 fire. He probably also enlarged the Cluniac priory of St Andrew.

Simon's eldest son (Simon II) was born c. 1090 and married Isabel de Beaumont, second daughter of Robert II, 2nd Earl of Leicester at an unrecorded date. The Beaumonts were an immensely powerful faction at the time of the unrest and were supporters of King Stephen's party. Simon II died in 1153.

His son, Simon III, married Alice, daughter of the Earl of Lincoln, and continued the building works, founding St Mary de la Pré (Delapré Abbey) in 1145 (the nuns having been moved

Left: Northampton showing the castle and the river c.1100 (B Giggins)

Below: The tower from the south east (C Knowles)

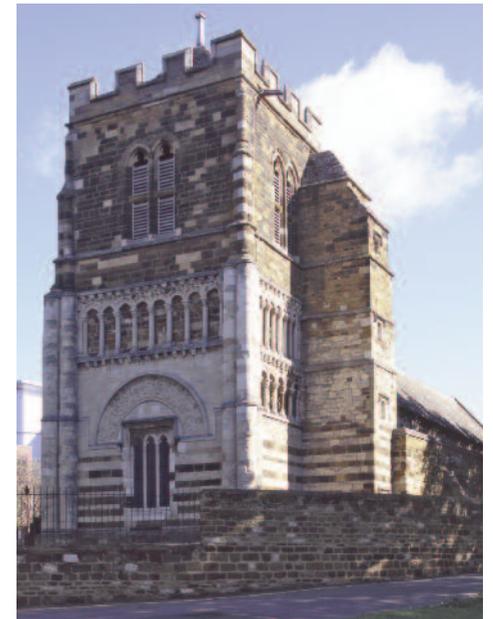
from Fotheringhay) and Sawtry in Huntingdonshire, and richly endowed the great abbey of Croyland. Simon III died in 1184.

The most probable builder was Simon de St Lys II. The similarities of plan to St Mary de Castro in Leicester suggest it was erected after his marriage to Isabel, probably after 1110 when he was 20 years old. The chevron work in the decoration is not inconsistent with an early date; it appeared first at Durham c.1100 though its confident appearance at St Peter's suggests a date some 30 years later, but still within Simon II's lifetime.

Northampton's townsfolk already had All Saints' church, founded about 1110 by Simon's father and no doubt fully functioning by 1130, and St Giles' parish church in the town's new eastern extension. There was also Simon I's Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Thus, St Peter's was not needed to serve the townsfolk or for commemorative purposes, but since the site was long hallowed, and was itself a place of pilgrimage, it could not be ignored; people were still leaving money to St Ragner's Altar and Fraternity in 1496 and a 14th-century document refers to a shrine of St Ragner in St Peter's. The nearby castle probably did not have its own church, so St Peter's may have been intended as a ceremonial church for the earldom, a 'palatine' chapel served by its own priests similar to a collegiate church. There is, significantly, no physical distinction between secular and ecclesiastical responsibility for the fabric, and

the patron would have full visual access to the rites and a view of the Elevation at the Mass at the high altar in the three-bay chancel. Thus the aisles, without a clear view and with their transverse arches, should perhaps be viewed more as a *porticus* off the main body of the building.

It seems likely, then, that St Peter's is a palatine chapel within the precinct, if not the actual baileys, of the Earl's castle. An earl of Simon's standing would, in his eyes, deserve no less.



*Below: Arch of the former west door on the western face of the tower (Bennie Historic Conservation)*

*Right: Exterior from the north-east (C Knowles)*

## EXTERIOR

St Peter's is now approached from Marefair on the north side. It stands in a small nearly rectangular churchyard, closed for burial in 1858, and from which most of the headstones were cleared after 1944. Many slabs have been reused as paving. Near the present entrance is a War Memorial cross of 1919, raised on three steps and with a heavy carved head, designed by Harold Brakspear of Corsham.

The church presents a long low profile, with a squat west tower. It is entered through a small gabled porch, rebuilt in 1939–40, with a large

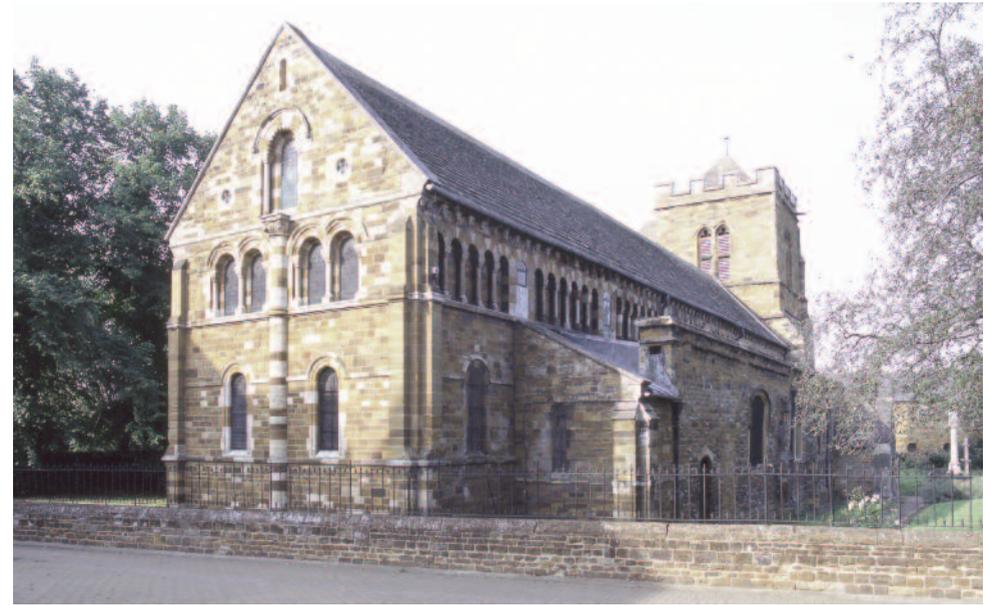


mitred figure of St Peter of 1944 in an early medieval style in the gable niche.

The building is constructed in ironstone (a brown ferruginous sandstone), probably obtained from Duston, with details and dressings in a cream-coloured oolitic limestone from Blisworth. Later repairs were carried out in a Weldon-type oolitic stone. The main roofs are covered with Collyweston stone slates, indigenous to Northamptonshire.

To the left of the porch some rebuilding may be seen in the walls, a buttress having been removed in the 19th century when the first north porch was added. The upper part of the aisle walls each side was rebuilt in the 14th century to incorporate the present larger windows, although these have been extensively repaired since. The much weathered projecting limestone string course still bears its original ovolo, or wide convex, moulding, indicating that only the upper part of the wall was rebuilt. Above the windows the parapet has been rebuilt more recently. The aisle wall continues eastwards without any break for the chancel chapel, which curiously starts beyond the second buttress. There is a small door towards the east end giving access to the north aisle chapel. A section of the string course has been built into the wall indicating that the eastern end of the aisle has been rebuilt.

Above the aisle roof, a continuous arcade runs from end to end of the building; some of the



arches are perforated with windows to light the nave. Above this is the projecting eaves course or corbel table, which has 67 grotesque heads and carvings each side. Some heads of the corbel table may be original but most are Victorian.

At the east end of the aisle a section with a lower lead-covered roof has a single-light late-Norman window, reset here in the 1850s when the whole of this end was rebuilt. In 1849, the Architectural Society of the Archdeaconry invited Mr (later Sir) George Gilbert Scott to undertake the restoration of the building, removing the alterations and building works undertaken in the 17th century. Scott was born at Gawcott, near Buckingham, but moved to Northamptonshire when his father, the Revd Thomas Scott, took the living of Wappenham, near Towcester.

The east end of the church is entirely Scott's work, based on his archaeological findings. The windows, two with round mouldings and four above continuing the side arcading, are Scott's invention based on the Church of St Cross, Winchester. Scott also provided the two round windows flanking the chevron-headed top

window. The end has small corner buttresses and three wall strings, one at the springing of the arches. The evidence for the central half-column buttress on the east end wall was found, and this Scott reproduced on the new east end, together with its beaked base. This buttress is an unusual feature, but is known in other early buildings.

The south side of the church is largely a repeat of the north side but rather more weathered. The south doorway has a Norman arch, without a tympanum, similar to the one within the north porch. The original use of alternating coloured stones on this Norman doorway has not been respected by the various restorations. By the left capital is a graffito of 1713. The aisle wall has five square-headed three-light windows of the late 14th or 15th centuries, heavily restored. The principal difference this side is the modern addition of a boiler house and flue, and a large vice (stair) added to the tower when it was rebuilt. The east wall of the south aisle has a single round-headed lancet window.

The imposing west tower was in ruins in 1607 and was rebuilt, remarkably faithfully, sometime later in the 17th century some 4 m (12 ft) to the east, cutting the end bay of the nave and

## INTERIOR

clerestories. The two lower stages are of Norman design, with coloured stone banding carefully reset on each side, and two bands of decorative arcading standing on a corbelled table at the second stage. These are reduced to one band, clumsily reset, on octagonal columns above the high west doorway. The arcading is better preserved on the north side. The two western corners of the tower have triple round buttresses, with shaft rings at the string courses. These buttresses diminish by stages to one shaft on the ironstone top stage of the tower, and stop below the crenellated parapet. This top stage, housing the bells, has double trefoiled openings on each face.

The arch of the former western doorway, reset in the west wall of the tower, contains the principal external carvings. Here are three orders under a carved hood moulding. On the inner one, the arch stones (voussoirs) are carved to give the impression of a series of arches and beakheads overlapping a twisted roll. The next order is of latticework (chip-carving), whilst the outer order is carved with ribbons forming roundels with the ribbon criss-crossing within the loop. The arch now looks odd since the three orders were compressed when it was rebuilt, giving the whole composition a rather flat appearance, though there are parallels such as the west door arch at the Basse-Oeuvre, Beauvais (France). The doorway was replaced in the 18th century by a smaller one, and again in the 19th century by the present three-light window.

The church consists of a nave and chancel with narrow aisles, and a west tower, a basilican plan unusual in Britain. The inside of the church is like no other. The nave marches relentlessly towards the east end without an obvious break for the chancel or sanctuary. The nave and chancel are barely distinguishable from one another. The nave consists of three square bays, the western bay shortened to a half bay when the tower was rebuilt, and the chancel of one-and-a-half bays. Generally it is all laid out on a module of 9ft (2.76m), approximately half a rod or 3 cubits. The original width of the aisles is not certainly known, but at 2m and 2.1m (6ft) wide each side, it seems that the lower parts of the walls at least are original, and the Norman north and south doorways have not been reset. Each bay is divided lengthwise by an intermediate column intensifying the rhythm towards the east end. The piers between bays have half-columns, those facing into the nave rising to carved capitals at ceiling level, whilst those facing the aisles appear to have originally carried transverse arches rather than vaults. The arcade arches are carved with chevron work, each identical in detail, and characteristic of Norman work after its first appearance in c. 1100.

At the west end of the nave, a fine Norman arch of three orders on nook shafts survives, now forming the entrance to the tower. It was rebuilt in this position when the nave was shortened by the rebuilding of the original west tower in the 17th century. The present entrances are in this



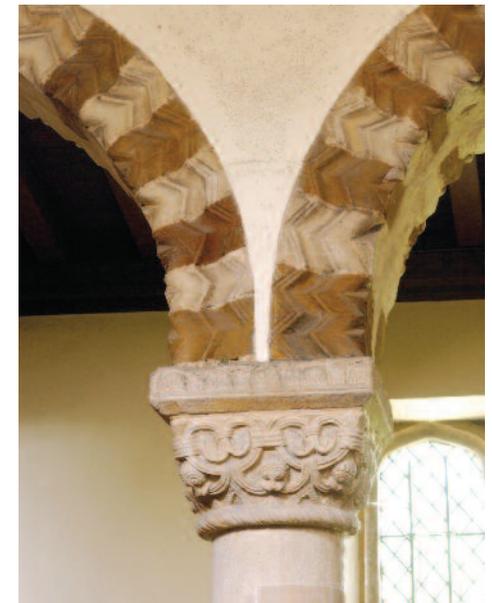
*Above: The nave looking west (C Knowles)*

half bay at the west; the head of the west arch is 272 mm (11 in) lower. It is very likely that the elaborate arch reset externally in the west face of the present west tower was the main formal entrance to the building as originally planned. The fine reset internal arch suggests that the west door opened into a narthex under a tower, as at Notre Dame, Jumièges (1040–66), back in the Norman homeland. Why was St Peter's rebuilt on this plan, since this basilican arrangement is rare in Britain? The nearest parallel is the collegiate church of St Mary de Castro, Leicester, founded c. 1107 by Robert de Beaumont. The unusual plan might be explained if it is assumed that the high altar was set in the third bay of the chancel, and the space behind reserved either for the shrine and relocated relics of St Ragener, or for clergy use.

### CARVINGS

The glory of St Peter's is its remarkable series of carved capitals and details. No two are alike, but all are variants within the strict framework of cushion capitals, with separate abaci. (A cushion capital is the rounded, undecorated head of a

*Below: Intermediate column in the nave with chevron arches of alternating coloured stone (Bennie Historic Conservation)*





Left: Column capital in the south-east corner of the chancel (C Knowles)

Below left: Column capital in the north side of the nave (C Knowles)

Below right: Column capital in the south side of the nave (C Knowles)

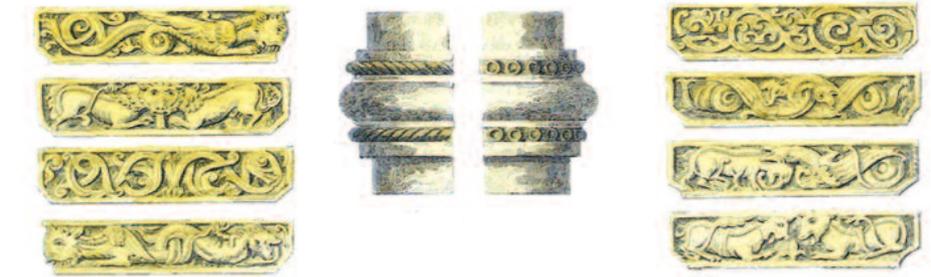
Right: Column capitals engraved by B Ranson for George Baker in the early 19th century (Northamptonshire Record Office)

column and an abacus is the flat slab forming the top of the capital.) No surface is left undecorated. There is little undercutting as found in later work. The carved decoration is a riot of scrollwork incorporating foliage, birds and beasts, entangled, devouring, affronting or in other poses derived from the Anglo-Saxon tradition. Significantly, no single carving throughout has any overt Christian symbolism, nor is there any attempt to tell a story. The columns have mid-shaft rings, carved with annulets and cabling. The columns and piers rise from simple moulded bases, with beak forms at the corners of the square plinths, and each pier has a shaft extending up to the tie beam level, articulating the walls and emphasising the square bays. The carvings were carefully unpicked from their covering of plaster by Ann-Elisabeth Baker in the first decade of the 19th century.

The scrollwork, a double string ribbon, sometimes beaded, enmeshing the beasts, is very similar to that found on the cloister capitals of Reading Abbey, dated to 1125–50. Above the arches, simple clerestory openings bring light into the church. They sit oddly in relation to the arcades below, so as to coincide with the arcading externally, but are clearly original.

The nook shafts of the western nave arch are carved with varying decoration, chevrons, basketwork and plain, whilst the arch itself is again a riot of chevrons.

The present main entrance, within the porch on the north side, is a small Norman doorway, with one nook shaft each side rising to small trumpet capitals, and carrying two orders of plain voussoirs or arch stones. The stones have been axe-dressed, a characteristic Norman technique.





At the east end of the north aisle (now a vestry) under the floor, 12 steps lead down to a small vaulted crypt 2.87 m x 4.9 m (9 ft x 16 ft), with transverse arches, probably inserted in the 15th century when the aisle wall was first remodelled. It was recorded by Sir Henry Dryden and is described by G N Wetton in his County Guide of 1847. This is now sealed as it became the burial vault for the Stoddart family in the 18th century.

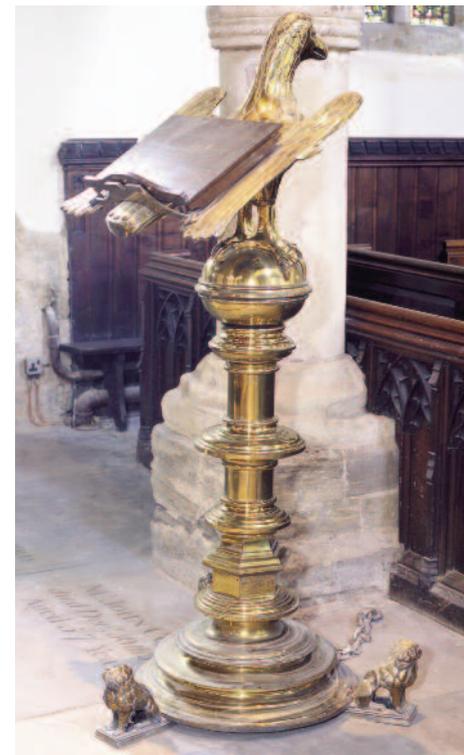
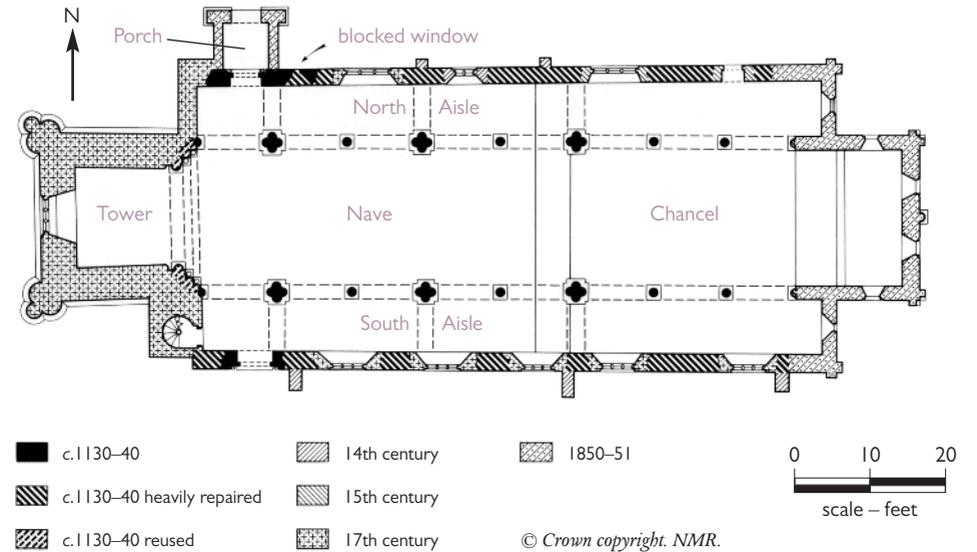
#### THE 19TH-CENTURY RESTORATIONS

There was an early 'restoration' in 1816, which has now been almost forgotten and probably amounted to little more than an internal reordering.

At the east end, the three tiers of fenestration are the result of mid-Victorian rebuilding by George Gilbert Scott. Scott not only rebuilt the 17th-century east end to its original length, as he established by excavation, but re-roofed the building throughout. His roof is both appropriate

and unassuming, having cambered tie beams and crown posts. He also lowered the nave and aisle floor levels by about a foot (33 cm) to create the orthodox two steps up into a chancel, with a further three to the high altar, unfortunately reducing the singular impact of the undivided building. This work cost a total of £1,553.

Further restoration work to the chancel was undertaken by John Oldrid Scott (second son of George Gilbert) in 1878–79, when an elaborate stencilled decorative scheme to the east wall and encaustic paving were introduced. As part of the scheme a carved oak reredos was installed, painted by Burlison and Grylls with a Crucifixion and representations of SS Peter, Matthew, Mark and Luke in niches either side. The central panel is a copy on canvas of the original which was painted on plaster. The east wall was overpainted in the 1960s, but has recently been uncovered and restored. The aisle roofs were restored in 1882.



Left: Interior looking east (C Knowles)

Above: The lectern (C Knowles)

There is some stained glass in the south windows installed in 1892. The west window is by Powell and Co., 1891, and the north aisle two-light window is by Hymers, 1899. The glass in the east windows is of 1863, but is unattributed: it portrays events in the life of Christ, with the Ascension at the top. In the panel on the bottom right St Peter is receiving the keys.

#### FITTINGS AND MONUMENTS

The octagonal font, with its decorated sides representing windows, is a work of the 14th century, probably contemporary with the rebuilding of the aisle walls. It was reset in this, probably the original, position in 1944. Gilbert Scott designed the painted openwork spire cover.

The stone pulpit of 1851 together with a low chancel screen were removed in 1931, and replaced with an oak pulpit designed by W Talbot Brown of Wellingborough.

The handsome brass lectern is a copy of the 15th-century brass lectern at Newstead Abbey, Nottinghamshire.

The two-manual organ installed in 1884 was replaced by the present instrument from Repton United Reformed Church, Derbyshire c.1980 when the original organ case by Oldrid Scott was sold to Christ Church, Moss Side, Manchester.

Below: Monument to William Smith (d.1839) (C Knowles)

Right: The sanctuary (C Knowles)



The most important monument is undoubtedly that to William Smith, the Father of English Geology and a founder member of the British Association. This great man, of humble origin born in Churchill, Oxfordshire in 1769, worked as an engineer and surveyor to collieries in the Somerset coalfield, then as engineer to the canal for the Duke of Bridgewater. He evolved the theory of stratification, eventually producing the 'Map that Changed the World' in 1815. William died whilst staying with the eminent county historian, George Baker, in Northampton in 1839, and his marble wall tablet and mounted bust against the west wall of the aisle were carved by Matthew Noble. His actual resting place is under a low sandstone tomb immediately west of the tower.

Another Smith, John, resting under a ledger of black marble in the nave, was a celebrated mezzotint engraver of the early 18th century, born in Daventry and pupil of Sir Godfrey Kneller until the latter's jealousy of Smith's skills put an end to their friendship.

There is also a memorial tablet in white and black marble, appropriately in the form of an inscribed scroll, to George Baker, the

*'historian of his native county, skilled in archaeology and medieval learning ...'*

who died in 1851, and to Ann-Elisabeth Baker. His monument, also by Noble, is in the south-west corner of the church. He was a leading light in the restoration of the church.



There are some good wall monuments, particularly in the south aisle, including a large arched monument to the Revd Edward Lockwood, rector for 52 years, with a long eulogy; he died in 1802. There are also tablets to the Jeffcutt family of the early 18th century. The Very Revd Basil Marsh, archdeacon and author of the previous church guide, has a small tablet over his ashes, let into the chancel floor in 1998.

The only significant brass is in a floor ledger slab towards the east end of the nave, beautifully inscribed to Geo. Evans, who died in 1757.

There is a ring of eight bells in the tower, all dated 1734 and cast by Abraham Rudhall II of Gloucester. They were probably made at the instigation of the Hesilrige family, living in the 17th-century Hazelrigg House just along Marefair from the church. They were rehung in the

original frame in 1893 and again in 1928 by Gillett and Johnson of Croydon, when they were also retuned. The fittings were overhauled in 2004.

Externally there are a number of headstones laid down as a path. One, by the tower, is to E Blount of the East India Company, who died in 1822. There is also a memorial to Edward Stanton, who was churchwarden at the start of Scott's restoration.

#### RECENT HISTORY

Due mainly to a shift of population from the town centre, a redundancy scheme was applied for in 1996 and the last service was held on Easter Sunday 1998. The church was then vested in The Churches Conservation Trust in September of that year. The Trust has since carried out a programme of consolidation and repair, including extensive repairs to the roofs, under the supervision of Tim Ratcliffe.

## FURTHER READING

Barnwell, P S 2004. 'The Laity, the Clergy and the Divine Presence: The Use of Space in Smaller Churches of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 157.

Fernie, E 2000. *The Architecture of Norman England*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Giggins, B L 1999. *Northampton's Forgotten Castle*, unpublished MA dissertation, Leicester, University of Leicester,

Maguire, H P 1970. 'A twelfth century workshop in Northampton' *Gesta*, ix.

Marsh, The Venerable B B 1966. *The Parish Church of Saint Peter, Northampton* (Guidebook); also other guidebooks.

Serjeantson, R M 1904. *History of the Church of St Peter, Northampton*, Northampton.

RCHME *An Inventory of Archaeological Sites in Northampton*. Vol V. Sites and Churches in Northampton.

RCHME *Northampton, St Peter. Northamptonshire (Peterborough)*, Report produced for the Council for the Care of Churches.

Williams J H 1979. *St Peter's Street Northampton. Excavations 1773-1976*, Northampton, Northants Development Corporation.

Williams J H, Shaw M and Denham, V 1985. *Middle Saxon Palaces at Northampton*, Northampton, Northants Development Corporation.



## THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION TRUST

The Churches Conservation Trust is the leading charity that cares for and preserves English churches of historic, architectural or archaeological importance that are no longer needed for regular worship. It promotes public enjoyment of them and their use as an educational and community resource.

Whatever the condition of the church when the Trust takes it over its aims are, first and foremost, to put the building and its contents into a sound and secure condition as speedily as possible. Then the church is repaired so that it is welcoming to visitors and those who attend the public events or occasional services that may be held there (Trust churches are still consecrated). Our objective is to keep it intact for the benefit of present and future generations, for local people and visitors alike to behold and enjoy.

There are some 340 Trust churches scattered widely through the length and breadth of England, in town and country, ranging from charmingly simple buildings in lovely settings to others of great richness and splendour; some are hard to find, all are worth the effort.

Many of the churches are open all year round, others have keyholders nearby; all are free. A notice regarding opening arrangements or keyholders will normally be found near the door. Otherwise, such information can be obtained direct from the Trust during office hours or from the website [www.visitchurches.org.uk](http://www.visitchurches.org.uk).

Visitors are most welcome and we hope this guidebook will encourage you to explore these wonderful buildings.

**NEARBY ARE THE TRUST CHURCHES OF**  
St Michael, Farndish  
4 miles SE of Wellingborough off B569

St Bartholomew, Furtho  
10 miles S of Northampton off A508

All Saints, Holdenby  
6 miles NW of Northampton off A50

St Peter and St Paul, Preston Deanery  
4 miles SE of Northampton off B526

St Michael, Upton  
2 miles W of Northampton on A45

© The Churches Conservation Trust 2007

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to acknowledge with thanks the kind help of Mr John Rigby, Mr Brian Giggins, and Dr Paul Barnwell in the preparation of this guide. The views expressed are however solely the author's responsibility.

*Left: Interior looking south-west (Bennie Historic Conservation)*  
*Back cover: Column capital in north side of nave (C Knowles)*