



About St John's Church

The church we see today is probably the third to be built on this site. The original church dated from the second half of the 12th century and was founded by the Norman rulers of Stamford. During the 14th century the church was confiscated by the king and sold to Beauvale Priory. A group of local gentry and clergy then acquired the church and rebuilt the church by 1451.

The structure of the church remained virtually untouched until the 19th century, though like most English churches, the interior changed dramatically. Little evidence survives for the internal changes that took place as a result of the Reformation apart from the removal of the rood loft in 1564. Much of the mediaeval stained glass survived until the 18th century but few panels can be found in the church today.

The major restoration of 1856 under the direction of a local architect, Edward Browning, involved the introduction of a complete new scheme of pews. The medieval roofs and the lovely angels were painted and new stained glass was placed in both east and west windows.

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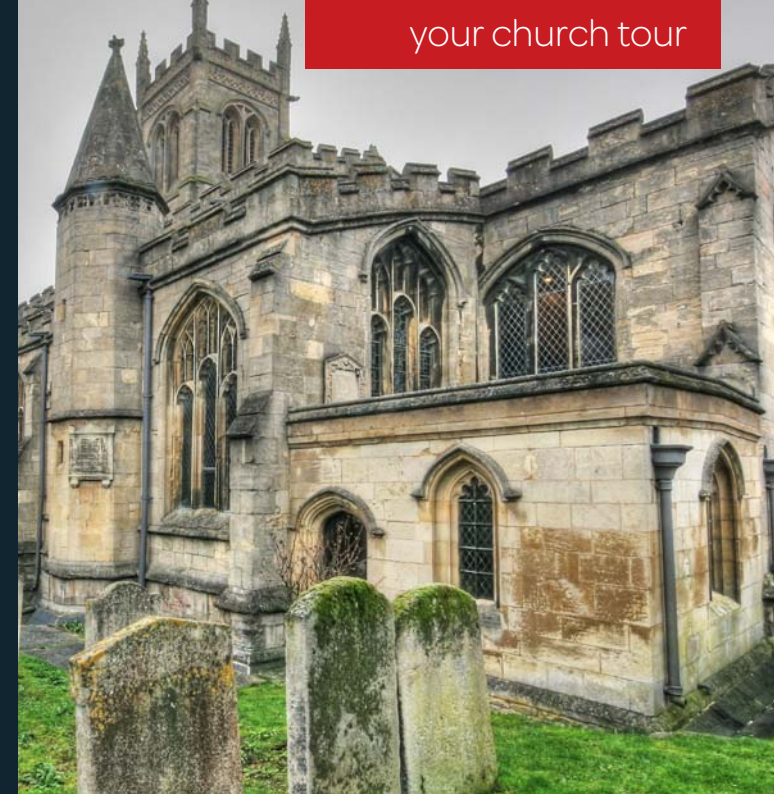
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your church tour



Church of
St John the
Baptist
Stamford



THE CHURCHES
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The historic Church of St John the Baptist

10 things to see before you leave...

1 The nave and aisle roofs contain a collection of horizontal winged angels holding a variety of emblems such as shields, musical instruments, crowns and sceptres. The angels are contemporary with the church of 1451 but were painted during the 1856 restoration.

2 The nave roof is supported by wall posts which rest on **corbels**. These corbels are carved from stone in the shape of grotesque heads and possible caricatures of local people. One corbel stone on the south side of the nave roof has two faces; one laughing and one grimacing.

3 The arcade or arches between the nave and aisles are again contemporary with the 15th century build. The fine columns give an impression of light and space in the church.

4 The pews which dominate the interior were designed by local architect Edward Browning for the 19th century restoration. The bench ends have ornate 'poppy heads' with arm rests featuring lions and dragons.

5 The relatively modern wooden pulpit was donated by E. Bowman & Sons of Stamford and replaced a stone pulpit from the 1856 restoration.

6 Rood (meaning 'cross') **screens** were commonly found in churches until the Reformation in the mid-16th century, although few now survive in their original position. The screen would divide nave from chancel and commonly have a rood loft above it with a separate wooden rood beam supporting an image of Christ crucified, flanked by the figures of the Virgin Mary and John the Evangelist. The original rood screen in St John's now sits across the south chancel arch.

7 The small door high up on the south wall of the aisle gave access to the rood loft from the **rood stairs**.

8 The memorial plaque to Sir Malcolm Sargent, musician and conductor can be found on the south wall of the church. Sir Malcolm sang in the choir and also learned to play the organ in St John's.

9 By the south door into the churchyard is some **moulded stonework**, probably from the original 12th century church.

10 The font has quatrefoil panels (four 'petal' design) and dates from the mid-15th century. The wooden font cover is 17th century.

