



About St John's Church

Built in 1754-55 by Henry Sephton, as a chapel of ease for Lancaster Priory, St John the Evangelist is a church of five bays and semicircular apse in ashlar sandstone under a slate roof. The nave has galleries to the north and south, with an organ case at the west end in the style of Robert Adam, by Gillows c. 1785. The church was remodelled by John Harrison, after a bequest from Thomas Bowes, who added tower and spire in 1784. Harrison also built the Skerton bridge over the river Lune, and parts of Lancaster Castle. The tower is in three stages, the second of which carries a clock; the third stage the bells. The tower is topped with a rotunda and drum with spirelet. The south porch was built in 1874, the apse, side chapel and vestry were added in 1920. The interior was restored in 1950 by Sir Albert Richardson. The church is listed Grade II* and, due to declining congregation was closed in 1981 and vested into the care of The Churches Conservation Trust in 1983.

The church began its long association with the town Corporation, after the administration fell out with Lancaster Priory. The nave houses an impressive collection of box pews, including the Corporation Pews, for the use of town dignitaries. The glass in the north aisle and side chapel is by Shrigley and Hunt, based at Castle Hill, the apse windows depict scenes from the life of Jesus, dated 1870. There is a fine iron pulpit from 1875 and a plain stone font from 1858. The organ is by B. Langshaw, built 1784 and successively rebuilt by Brindley & Co of Sheffield, Henry Ainscough of Preston and Victor Saville of Carnforth.

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Access

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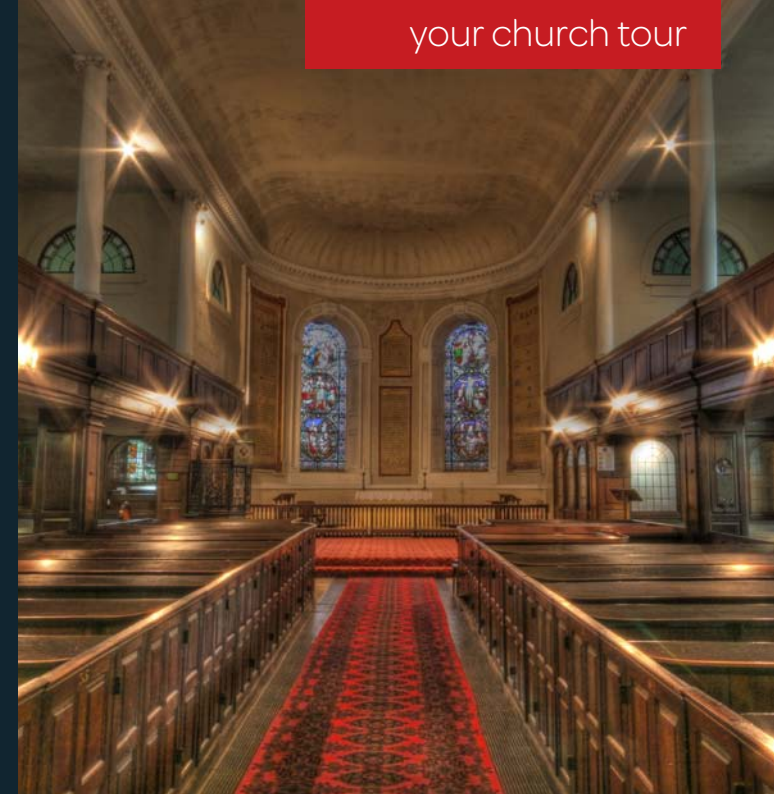
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Church of
St John the
Evangelist
Lancaster



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The historic Church of St John

10 things to see before you leave...

- 1 The plain stone **font** of 1858 was a gift of Elizabeth and Dorothy Bowes. This font is believed to have come from St Anne's church on its closure. The original is outside planted with bulbs.
- 2 The **Royal Arms** are of George II (1727-1760).
- 3 There are oak-panelled galleries on the north, south and west sides of the church, with Ionic columns from the galleries to the barrel-vaulted ceiling. The central part of the west gallery is supported by two timber **Doric columns**.
- 4 The **organ** was dedicated 2nd January 1785, as the gift of Abram Rawlinson Esq. MP. Rawlinson was a Quaker, who was expelled from the Quaker church for carrying guns on one of his ships. The organ was built in 1784 by Langshaw. The impressive organ case is mahogany, in Robert Adam style, made by Gillows of Lancaster in about 1785.
- 5 There is a fine collection of **box pews** in the nave of the church. On the south side the pews have been modified to form a double pew for the use of the Corporation. The mahogany communion rails have turned balusters.
- 6 The wall **monuments** around the body of the church form an illustration of the history of St John's. Not only do they record prominent members of the congregation, they record significant benefactors to the fabric and furnishings, and the sacrifice given in the two great armed conflicts of the 20th century.
- 7 The **stained glass** in the north aisle and the chapel dates from the late 19th or early 20th century and is by Shrigley and Hunt. The glass in the apse windows dates from 1870, donated by John Hall in memory of his wife.
- 8 The **chancel and sanctuary** are formed within the added apsidal or semi circular east end. The domed ceiling highlights the importance placed on the liturgy; forming a classic auditory church layout with the pulpit in the nave.
- 9 The present iron **pulpit** was a replacement installed in 1875. The curve in the pews at the east end, where the central aisle widens, shows the site of the original pulpit.

- 10 The east end of the church was redesigned in the 1870s and again in the 1920s. The **north chapel** and **south vestry** were made by taking down the eastern bays of both galleries.

