



Welcome to St Mary's Church

The first evidence of a church at Clifton is in the 1086 Domesday Book where priest and church are mentioned. The early building may have been of stone or wood and would most probably have been a simple rectangle with the east end divided off to form a square chancel, with probably a central tower and certainly a nave. None of this early building remains visible although the existing church may cover its foundations. The age of the present church dates from 1175-1200 with the Chancel being enlarged in 1500.

Nave

At the back of the Nave is the Marcussen organ built in Denmark. This organ is supposed to be one of the best organs to play in England. This is partly due to the excellent acoustics of the church and Mr David Jones, who was an acoustic specialist at Nottingham University who designed the roof.



North Transept

This contains the main memorials to the Clifton's of Clifton. All the memorials are carved in alabaster, which is a soft, marble-like, semi-transparent stone which was quarried locally. Tombs made from Nottinghamshire



alabaster can be found in Italy and Spain.

Alabaster is known to us as Gypsum and can be seen in strata along the Grove. One of the niches on the East wall contains a heart shaped leaden casket containing a heart, this is known locally as the Crusaders Heart, although it does not in fact date from the time of the Crusades. It was believed that when a man was killed in the Holy Land his heart was brought home in a casket to be buried in his own home village.

South Transept

This contains the memorial slab to Joseph known as the Indian Prince, date 1684, who was a servant to the Cliftons and had become a Christian 10 years before his death. That he was valued by the Clifton family is evident by his burial inside the Church. At over 6ft tall you can see the mark cut into the stonework of the porch with the letters I.P. beside it, at a time when most men were not much above 5'3" of 5'4"



Tower Sanctuary

Ceiling designed by Ronald Sims to depict the Crown of Thorns. The door in the sanctuary leads to the Belfry which contains eight bells.



The Chancel

The Altar is of blue Hornton limestone and is made from stonework recovered from the altar of the monastery at Kelham, near Newark. The Altar frontal was restored by members of the Derby Cathedral Embroiders' Guild.

After Henry V111 broke with the Catholic Church he ordered that all stone altars should be destroyed and replaced with a simple wooden table covered with a fair linen cloth. One reason for this was that stone altars were symbolic of sacrifice rather than a meal. The good people of Clifton did not break up their stone altar, however but rather buried it under the place where the wooden table stood. It stayed there, forgotten and undiscovered for many years until its rediscovery during the last restoration. It can now be seen under the present altar.

The floor has Victorian tiles which show the Passion of Christ (the Crown of Thorns, the nails etc.) and the symbols of Mary, the fleur de lys and the rose. Looking up - and behind is the *Coat of Arms of Christ*.

We hope that you have enjoyed looking around this beautiful church or simply sitting and taking in the peace of your surroundings.

For nearly 1000 years People have gathered in this building to worship and to pray, Weddings, Baptisms and funerals have and are still being celebrated here.

We pride ourselves on being a caring church, supporting each other in good times and also at sad times.

In addition to our regular Sunday Services, we hold a Music Festival in early July which covers everything from Jazz to classical, groups to large choirs; other concerts are also held during the year.

Further information and contact details can be found on the notice board situated in the entrance to the church.

**St Mary's Church Clifton Village, Clifton,
Nottingham, NG11 8NH**

