

THE NAVE

Talk by John Beaumont: 2 September 1989.

The name Nave is derived from Latin "navis", meaning a ship: from its appearance, rather like an upturned ship.

Its use was for the people, whereas the Quire was for the clergy.

Building started in 1108 It probably took about 50 years to complete, though there is no evidence for the date of completion. Building always started from the east end; therefore the crossing arches are the oldest stones.

Replaced Anglo-Saxon church; reasons for Norman rebuilding of Anglo-Saxon churches was usually a combination of 3 P's: prestige, piety and politics. The political importance of this border area near Trent was probable reason in our case.

Nave is entirely in the Norman Romanesque style. Typical of this style: drum columns, semi-circular arches. Practically no foundations: relies on its weight for stability.

The Crossing is similar to Tewkesbury, though not quite so high.

Triforium: The empty arches are unusual: the stubs for intended tracery are there, but they were never filled in. Ewan Christian (nineteenth century architect who carried out a very sensitive restoration), put tracery in one arch, disliked the effect and took it out again.

Clerestory: The round windows (more easily visible from the outside) are unusual.

Simplicity is the keynote of the style: the antithesis of Westminster Abbey. Examples of simplicity: billet moulding on arches, cable moulding on crossing arches, simple decorations on capitals.

Why is the Nave so uncluttered? Probable reasons related to fact that Minster was a collegiate church: not a prestige building; no one individual bent on self-advertisement; and hard to get agreement on anything.

Changes made since the Norman period:

Windows:

(a) Great West window put in to give more light to enable people to read; literacy quite high in 15th century. In addition, the technical skill to insert windows had been developed by then.

(b) Other Perpendicular windows at East end of Nave in both aisles.

(c) All " Norman" windows except North west one are Victorian.

1711 fire caused some destruction and oxidised the stone of the Screen, giving it its pink appearance.

Ceiling: present one, dating from 1850-1870, probably similar to original, was put in by Ewan Christian, replacing the flat ceiling put in after the 1711 fire.

Floor: laid down in the C19, using tombstones from churchyard, (none are actual tombs).

North Porch has interlaced round arches similar to those on N.W. tower, possibly giving rise to the eventual replacement of round by pointed arches. Door dates from the C14.

Material: Permian Sandstone from Mansfield. Former quarry on Chesterfield Road. Location now occupied by Payless DIY is the probable place from which it came.

Furnishings

1. Font made by William Balme. His bill survives: total cost was 5 guineas, including one shilling for beer. He made nine other similar fonts in this area.
2. Altar and its furnishings 20th century: frontal embroidered by Revd Leonard Childs of Buxton.
3. Pulpit: 19th century.
4. Lectern: copy of Newstead lectern in Quire. Ironwork on stand of very high quality.
5. Collection of medieval glass fragments in illuminated case by West door
- 6 For glass in windows, all mid- nineteenth century, see John Beaumont's booklet; but window behind Font includes scene of St. Paulinus baptising converts in River Trent, and holding a model of the Minster (minus pepperpots, not restored at date window designed)
7. Faint outline on S.E. column shows position of former brass of Annunciation - possibly in one of the nine Chantry Chapels existing before the Reformation. (capital of column cut away for canopy.).
8. Figure of Reigning Christ by Peter Ball. Dates from Sept. 1987. Carved in wood covered in brass and copper.

Other details;

Side aisles: have stone vaulting, but clumsily finished off compared with that in the Quire and Quire Aisles.

Grotesque Norman heads on ends of ribs include one of Judas being swallowed by Satan (about halfway along South wall).