



About St Mary's

The village of Roecliffe derives its name from the steep 'red cliff' above the River Ure upon which it stands. The church was built in 1844 near the site of a pre-Reformation chapel, on land given by Andrew Lawson of Aldborough Manor. The designer was Richard Hey Sharp, the Yorkshire-based architect who also worked with William Wilkins on the Yorkshire Museum in York. Many monuments to the Lawson family are found in the churchyard.

The church is neo-Norman in style and is believed to have been based on the design of an Oxford College. Building stone came partly from the old Roman quarry in Lawson's grounds and partly from a quarry at nearby Copgrove. The red-brick roof tiles possibly came from the local brickyard, now closed. Thirty years after the church was finished three massive buttresses were added at the north and south when the interior barrel vault showed signs of weakness. The roof is supported by a heavy oak frame resting on the stone vault, which is of an unusual semicircular shape. The doorway in the south wall is in the Norman style, with two orders of roll-moulding. The round-headed windows to the east of the doorway and in the north wall also reflect Norman influence.

The church was placed in the care of The Churches Conservation Trust in 1986.

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Access

Due to their age, historic church floors can be uneven and worn and lighting can be low level. Please take care, especially in wet weather when floors can be slippery.

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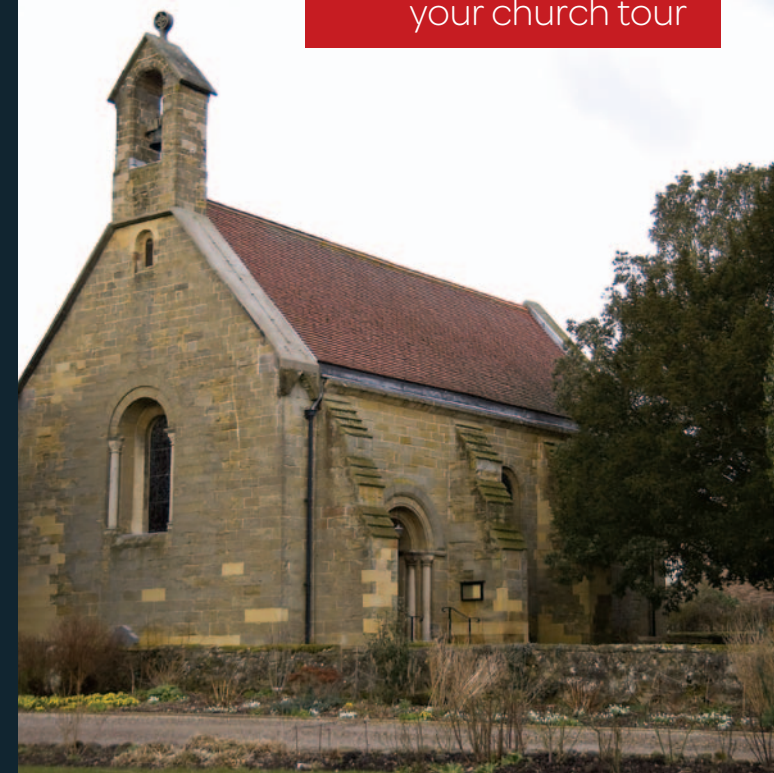
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Church of St Mary

Roecliffe



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The historic church of St Mary

10 things to see before you leave...

1 The sandstone drum **font** is probably mid-19th century and is believed to be a copy of an Anglo-Saxon font at Charlton-on-Otmoor Church, Oxfordshire. It has a conical oak and brass cover.

2 The solid oak **vestry door** is from York Minster. It was brought to St Mary's after the fire in the Minster in 1829.

3 Above and around the vestry door, are several styles of **wall panelling**, probably of the late 16th and 17th centuries. These depict scenes from the Nativity, the Flight into Egypt, David and Goliath, and Salome's dance.

4 The vestry fireplace has a Victorian **stone chimney piece and cast iron grate**. On the stonework of the chimney breast are carved fifteen human faces, some with exaggerated expressions.

5 The **pulpit and reading desk**, are oak and date to around 1700. They are believed to have been made from the pulpit of Holy Trinity Church, Hull, the pulpit from which Isaac Milner preached. He was a great supporter of the campaign to abolish slavery and played a great role in the religious conversion of William Wilberforce.

6 The **marble chancel floor and steps** formed part of the pavement in front of the high altar at York Minster and were brought here at the same time as the vestry door.

7 The linen-fold **oak panelling** of the chancel wall is possibly 17th century or older and came from Nun Monkton Priory. The Anglo-Norman village church at Nun Monkton was partly rebuilt in the 1870s and it is probable that the panelling was acquired at that time.

8 Barnett of York, a stained glass company which spanned three generations, made the important **east window** around 1843. The Virgin and Child may be based on work by Pinturicchio, an Italian fresco artist of the late 15th century.

9 The **altar rails** were locally made with metalwork by Mr Buck of Boroughbridge and the woodwork by Mr Benson of Roecliffe. The rails were erected in 1968 in memory of Lt. Col. N. C. S. Young, who bought the vicarage in 1958. The **altar** itself is an important 17th-century piece, made from solid oak.

10 Opposite the pulpit is a **box pew** with the date ANNO 1619 inscribed on the bottom panel. Carvings on other panels depict churches.

