

About St Peter's

Fragments of architectural evidence suggest there was a stone church on this site from the 11th century. On either side of the west door, inside the church, stonework round the capitals shows traces of Norman carved decoration. As Sandwich prospered, so the church grew. Sadly, it lost its south aisle in 1661 when the tower collapsed, leaving what has become the delightful 'secret garden' you see today.

Outside the church, notice how rubble from the south aisle was used to fill in the arches that formed part of the nave. Dutch and Flemish refugees fleeing religious persecution in the 16th century helped rebuild the tower. The Dutch-style cupola surmounting it and the Dutch gable over the south vestry, show their influence.

Inside, the floor is stepped as the ground rises to the east. Above, you can see the timber construction of the roof and the high clerestory windows at the east end. Originally, they were external and sat above the former roof, allowing more light into the chancel below but, when St Peter's was widened and the 14th-century roof raised, they found themselves inside the church! In the tower sits the Curfew bell, which is rung daily (except Sundays) at 8.00 pm, as it has since medieval times. The large windows and the absence of stained glass create a light interior. St Peter's location – in the heart of the town – makes it popular with those seeking peace and the simple beauty offered by its uncluttered spaciousness. It passed into the care of The Churches Conservation Trust in 1974. Today, the Trust is assisted by the Friends of St Peter's.

A thousand years of English history awaits you

The Churches Conservation Trust is the national charity protecting historic churches at risk.

We've saved over 340 beautiful buildings which attract almost 2 million visitors a year.

With our help and with your support they are kept open and in use – living once again at the heart of their communities.



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.

Help us do more

We need your help to protect and conserve our churches so please give generously. To become a CCT Supporter please pick up a leaflet or go to our website.



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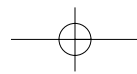


Church of St Peter

Sandwich, Kent



THE CHURCHES
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1 The **Royal Arms** of Charles II (oil on canvas) were installed in all churches at his instigation following the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660.



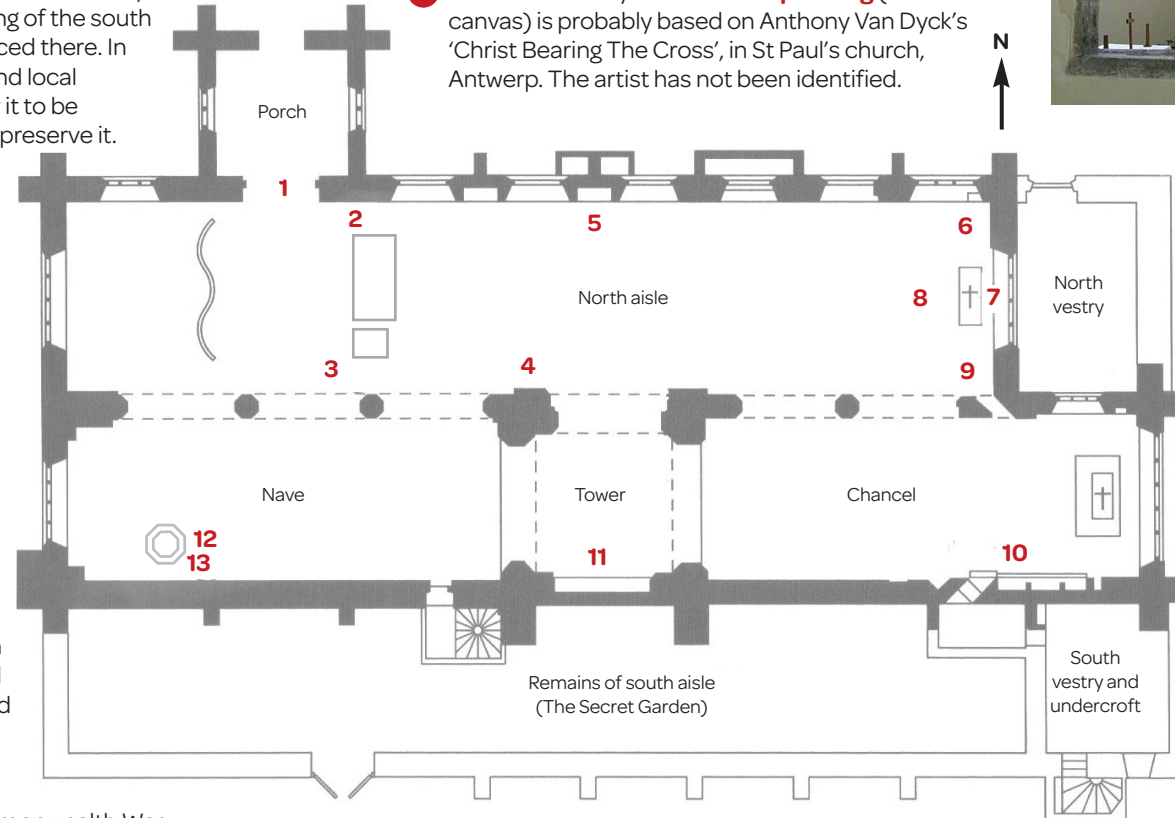
2 The carved **stone effigy** of a medieval knight (*overleaf*) depicts Sir John Grove (c. 1350), who lived nearby at Staple. He helped fund the building of the south aisle and his tomb was originally placed there. In the 18th century Sandwich mayor and local historian, William Boys, arranged for it to be brought inside the church to better preserve it.

6 This wall recess is a **banner-stave locker** (63 cm x 47 cm). Another, taller, example is in St Mary's church, Strand Street, also in the care of The Churches Conservation Trust. You can see hinge hooks and a recessed edge for a door. These cupboards stored the staff, or staves, of crucifixes and banners that were a feature of medieval processions.



9 The 'window' in the wall between the north aisle and the chancel is a **medieval squint**. It gave priests at the north aisle altar a clear view of the High Altar so they could co-ordinate the service during Mass. On the chancel side, the squint has a 14th-century arch with carved foliage in the spandrels.

3 The medieval **wall paintings** comprise a field of white shields painted in black outline on a red ochre background. Several bear the cross of St George. It is understood that they date from c. 1330.



4 This First World War **wooden cross** marked the grave of Major Roland Damer Harrison (DSO, Mentioned in Despatches) in France after he died in action on 10 September 1917, aged 36. He was awarded the DSO 'for gallantry at Guillemont from 20 July to 2 August 1916', and is buried in Epehy Wood Farm Cemetery (Commonwealth War Graves Commission). The marble inscription above the cross tells how it came to be in St Peter's.

7 The 17th-century Flemish **altar painting** (oil on canvas) is probably based on Anthony Van Dyck's 'Christ Bearing The Cross', in St Paul's church, Antwerp. The artist has not been identified.

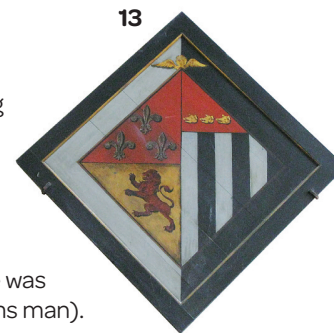
10 The trefoil arched **piscina** was used by the priest to wash his fingers at Mass. The **sedilia** next to it comprises three seats used by the celebrant, deacon and subdeacon at a High Mass. Much of the stonework was renewed in Revd Horace Gilder's restoration of the church in 1878. Note the beautifully carved foliate capitals of the circular shafts.

11 The wooden **Day memorial** is an unusual reredos with low relief foliate carving, designed by Arts and Crafts woodcarver Alec Miller. It is dedicated to two brothers, Herbert and Maurice Day, who died in the First World War. Their father, Revd Benjamin Day, was rector of St Peter's from 1913 to 1933. It was altered to its present form in the 1980s.



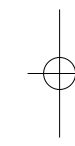
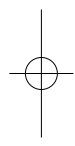
5 The recessed 14th-century tombs in the north wall were built when Sandwich was most prosperous. This highly decorated tomb was probably for a prominent member of Sandwich society, as the carved stonework incorporates the Sandwich Cinque Port arms (three lions conjoined to three ships' hulls). The **tomb** could be that of Thomas Elys, a merchant draper, MP, and mayor of Sandwich in 1370 and 1372. He founded St Thomas' Hospital in the town and a chantry chapel in St Peter's.

8 This 16th-century **brass memorial** in the floor facing the north aisle altar comprises two brasses: one a coat of arms; the other, an inscription commemorating Thomas Gilbert (d. 1597). It states he was 'Searcher of Kent' (a customs man).

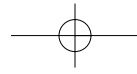


12 The massive **sounding board** (2 m across) looks like a large tabletop. It once formed a canopy over a 17th-century pulpit, which enabled the preacher to project his voice so the congregation could hear it.

13 This **hatchment** was probably made for Francis, wife of William Wodsworth, who died in 1813 aged 29. Hatchments were displayed for a time outside the home of a recently deceased person before being carried in the funeral procession and then placed permanently in the parish church.



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