



About St Mary's

The early history of the church and Garthorpe itself is shrouded in mystery, as no mention of a manor house or the village has been found before the modern period. However, given the antiquity of the church and the Scandinavian derivation of the village's name, it is likely there was some form of manorial establishment here during the medieval period.

The church was built between the 13th and 15th centuries with 19th-century additions and restorations. The nave arcades are believed to be 13th century, although they have rounded arches rather than the pointed arches characteristic of this era. A major restoration project was carried out between 1895 and 1896 under the direction of J. Day of Leicester. During this time the plaster was removed from the interior walls, the entire church was re-roofed and re-floored and new pews were installed along with heating and glazing, at a cost of £985 (about £59,000 in today's money). The porch was added in the mid 19th century.

The tower houses three bells, two of which can be dated to 1600 and 1608, whilst the third is 16th century. The churchyard is filled with many 18th-century monuments constructed from Leicestershire slate.

The church was placed in the care of The Churches Conservation trust in 1999.

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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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To protect these churches, and others like them, we need your help. If you enjoy your visit please give generously or if you would like to become a CCT supporter and join in our exclusive 'behind-the-scenes' visits please go to our website.



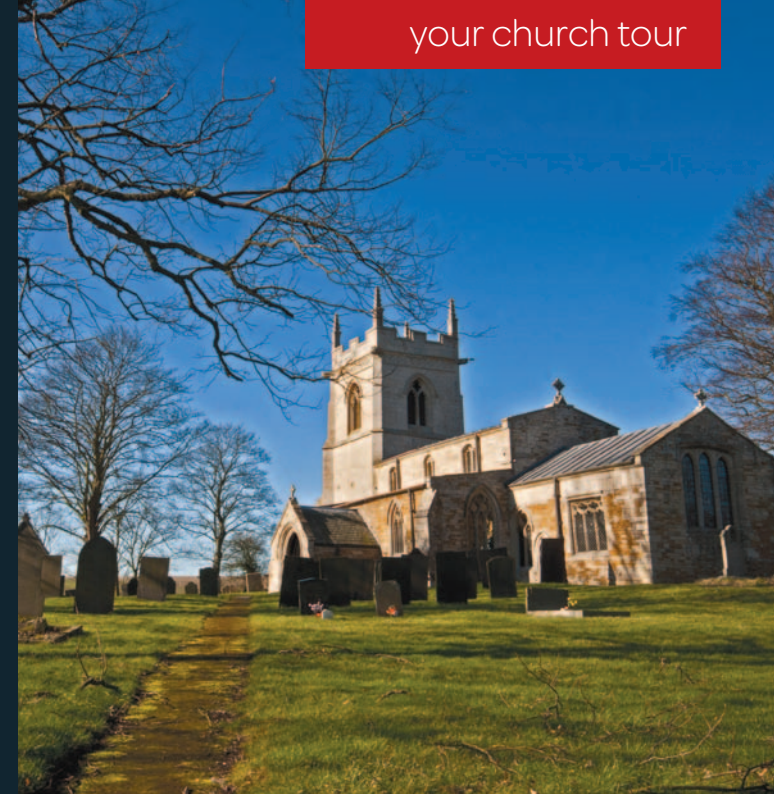
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Church of
St Mary

Garthorpe



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The historic church of St Mary

10 things to see before you leave...

- 1 A **benefaction board** found on the south wall of the church next to the entrance lists three specific donations made to the upkeep of the church and to the poor of the parish. Such benefactions were common practice in the past, when people were very conscious of earning the right to enter Heaven through giving alms. With no state welfare, the poor depended on such donations.
- 2 Set into the wall near the benefaction boards is the **Willmott memorial**, comprising a pair of ovals commemorating daughters of Thomas Willmott, Mary and Ann, who died in 1722 aged three and five.
- 3 The **font** is thought to date from the 13th or 14th century. The elaborately-carved cover is a 19th-century addition, constructed by the Reverend Thorold of Stainsby.
- 4 During the Middle Ages a screen divided the nave from the chancel, where Mass would be celebrated. The surviving **roodloft staircase** and upper-level doorway indicate the former presence of a gallery or altar atop the screen. Few medieval screens survived the 16th-century Reformation as they were superfluous to the new Protestant form of worship.
- 5 The **royal arms** of King George III sit above the Gothic arch between the nave and the chancel. Royal arms became common in parish churches during the 16th century, to serve as a reminder that the monarch is head of the Church of England.
- 6 A drop-sill sedile and a 14th-century arch suggest that a tomb may have been located here. This recess may also have served as an **Easter sepulchre**.
- 7 There are three **piscinas** in this church, indicating the former existence of subsidiary medieval altars. A piscina was the basin used by medieval priests to wash the sacred vessels. One has a small carved face underneath.
- 8 The **reredos** behind the communion table was given to the church by the vicar of Garthorpe in 1895 and made by the Revd W. Thorold.
- 9 There is a delicate design around the edge of the **World War I** monument, with fine calligraphy. The men who died are listed in order of rank.
- 10 In the churchyard is a 15th-century **sundial**. The stone base is limestone and the brass dial has a green patina, indicative of its age. This sundial is protected as a Grade II listed monument.

