

The Parish Church of SS.Peter and Paul stands on Deddington ridge and like the churches in Adderbury and King's Sutton can be seen for many miles around.The church is built of local stone; the original part of which there is very little left dates back to the beginnings of the 13th Century.

At one time the church had a tall steeple, which together with the Bell Tower collapsed and crashed into the body of the church in 1636. Enormous damage was done and the church was not usable for several years. Finally King Charles I ordered that enough money should be raised by the Diocese of Oxford to begin the very expensive repair work. The church was rebuilt in the next few years to its present form with a strong tower flanked by massive buttresses, and topped with eight splendid gold weather-vanes.On the west side of the tower are two statues representing the two church Saints. The clock was a later addition, a gift of the heirs of William Hudson, a local draper, after whom a street in Deddington is also named. It is interesting to note that until 1989 the clock was wound by hand; someone had to climb to the top of the tower twice a week and crank the heavy winding mechanism.Now there is an electric winder.

The tower contains a set of eight bells, which are rung on Sundays and at practice times, as well as for weddings and funerals. In recent years these bells needed repairing and enough money was collected locally to have them taken down, the bearings renewed and the bells retuned and rehung.

You come into the church by the 19th Century south porch. Passing the meeting area on your left you come to the Font. This is mid-Victorian, the cover is later, and both this and the screen behind it bear the carver's tiny trademark of a squirrel.

On the north wall opposite the entrance is another porch. This originally dates from the 15th Century and was used as access to the the church from the then Rectory, the big house at that side of the church.The fan tracery and the domed roof are worth looking at here.Moving along the north wall under a window you will see a set of stone steps which are matched by a similar one on the other side of the church.These were the supports for wooden stairs which led to a second floor.There were several chapels up there until the Reformation, and the upper row of six windows provided light for them.

The Lady Chapel has two stained-glass windows designed by the artist A.J.Davies, one shows the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Moving towards the Chancel you will come to the Screen which dates from the 15th Century. The Chancel is narrow compared with the main body of the church and the floor has been raised, so that the piscina on the right appears rather low in the wall. The East window is of stained-glass made in 1888 by C.E.Kempe, one of the best-known stained-glass designers of his day.

Turning round you now face the main body of the church, large and spacious with wide aisles, columns and arches. The pulpit, the lectern and the organ casing were made by local craftsmen at the turn of the Century. The Franklin Family of Deddington were well known for church carving, both locally and much further afield, in fact, St.Paul's Cathedral, Marlborough College and Hobart (New Zealand) have examples of their work.

Coming back to the south wall note the rather worn effigy of a Judge, possibly Ralph of Barford, and the large family memorial of the Harris family with three Hedgehogs on the shield.The Harrises were Deddington butchers who became famous for their Portk Sausages and Pies.

You are now back at the South porch.On each side of the entrance here are the remains of the first 13th Century walls.Very little remains from that period.