

Further Church history

The **Chancel** is spacious and an excellent example of mid-13th Century design. The 12th Century **Nave** has a 15th century roof, resting on strange stone corbels, and the large **clerestory** windows and roof are of this period. The north has round recessed arches without chamfers and the columns are circular with square caps. The whole arcade may be dated about 1180. The south aisle, with round caps, leaf foliage and chamfered arches is circa 1200.

The South Chapel is of 14th century and is known as Coton Chantry Chapel. It has an ancient stone altar. The painted reredos by C.E.Kempe is painted on zinc. On the south wall are the remains of a late 14th century mural painting.

In the small vestry by the organ, and on the wall is a memorial stone with armorial bearings of John Lee of Coton Hall, the ancestor of the American branch of the family, notably General Robert E. Lee of American Civil War fame.

The Tower Arch is a good example of Norman work dated 1150 AD.

At the entrance to the tower is a brass of John Grove, dated 1616 AD, the founder of Alveley Church School. This school no longer exists, and was situated some short distance from the south side of the church.

For details of further features see inside.

rev. 9Nov14

Altar Frontals

On the wall of the North Aisle hangs a glass case containing an embroidered Frontal dated 1470 AD showing as a centre piece the figure of Abraham with three tiny souls held up in a cloth. To either side and below him are angels holding scrolls, and decorations of fleur-de-lys and other flowers.

The frontal was found in an old chest in about 1865.

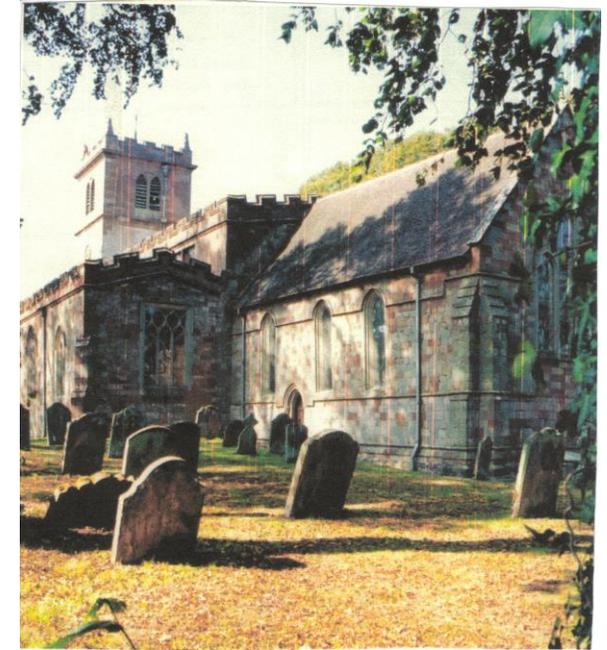


In the late 19th century a replica Altar Frontal was made by Sister Agnes of the Convent of St. Mary, Wantage for use in St. Mary's church.

As a millennium project for 2000 AD, the ancient frontal was cleaned and conserved, and the replica was completely stripped of its embroidered motifs, which were then re-sewn on new strips of hand made silk of rose pink and ivory colour, specially woven for the project.

The replica now hangs in a similar glass case on the south wall, and is used for festivals (see photo overleaf).

St Mary the Virgin Alveley



The church building began in 1140, sandstone and tufa. The nave has Norman pillars and arches. Chancel is Gothic, clerestory is Tudor.

Features include:

- ◆ A fine 15th century altar frontal with 19th century replica restored in AD 2000.
- ◆ Mediaeval wall painting in the side Chapel.
- ◆ Stained glass by Kempe restored by the Victorians.
- ◆ A ring of six bells.

See further information overleaf

Six **bells** founded by Thomas Rudhall of Gloucester in 1779 hang in the tower and are regularly rung for services. The bells were re-tuned and re-hung in 1959. They are in the key of G, and range from 4.5cwt treble to over 10cwt tenor.



Much of the **Stained Glass** in St Mary's is by C.E.Kempe, including the east window and the chapel windows. This window in the east clerestory window (south side) is 15th century, depicting Annunciation, St Anthony and a Bishop.

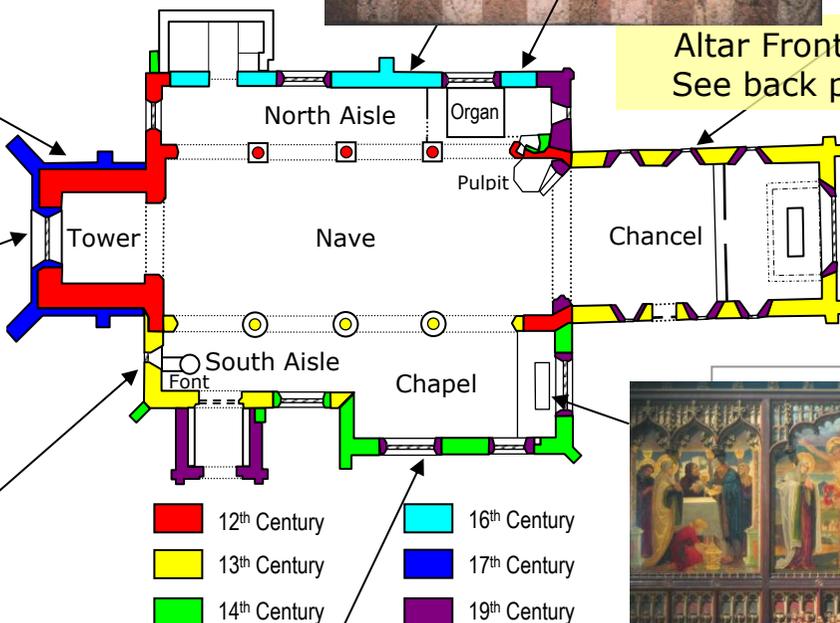
In the small vestry behind the organ is a memorial stone armorial bearings of **John Lee** of Coton Hall, the ancestor of the American branch of the family, notably General Robert E Lee of American Civil War fame.



Two ancient chairs are used during weddings.



These three painted roundels in the west window of the tower are probably foreign and said to be from Coton Chapel. They depict the *Chalice & Bread*, the *Crucifixion* and another scene.



Altar Frontals:
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The side Chapel contains on its south wall, the remains of a late 14th century **mural painting**, discovered at the restoration in 1879. It portrays good over evil, and shows a woman wearing a crown, with a skeleton of sin or death on her right, holding a sheaf of darts in one hand, and thrusting a spear through her heart with the other. On her left is a herald with a trumpet, and a man putting two dragons to flight with his sword.



Chapel

There is an ancient stone **altar**, with five consecration crosses, a beautifully carved piscine, and medieval tiles with grotesque animals.

The painted **reredos** (illustrated) by C.E.Kempe is attractive, and also unusual in that it is painted on zinc. It shows the Nativity, the Crucifixion and the descent from the cross.

Outside are fragments of ancient patterned masonry in the walls, and on an old battlement (right of porch) is a carving of a fox with a goose in its mouth.



Although modern, The Victorian stone font is interesting for its engraved palindrome in Greek, meaning:
Wash not only my body but also my heart.