

CHURCH TRAIL

For Young People

STAFFORD DECORATIVE
& FINE ARTS
SOCIETY



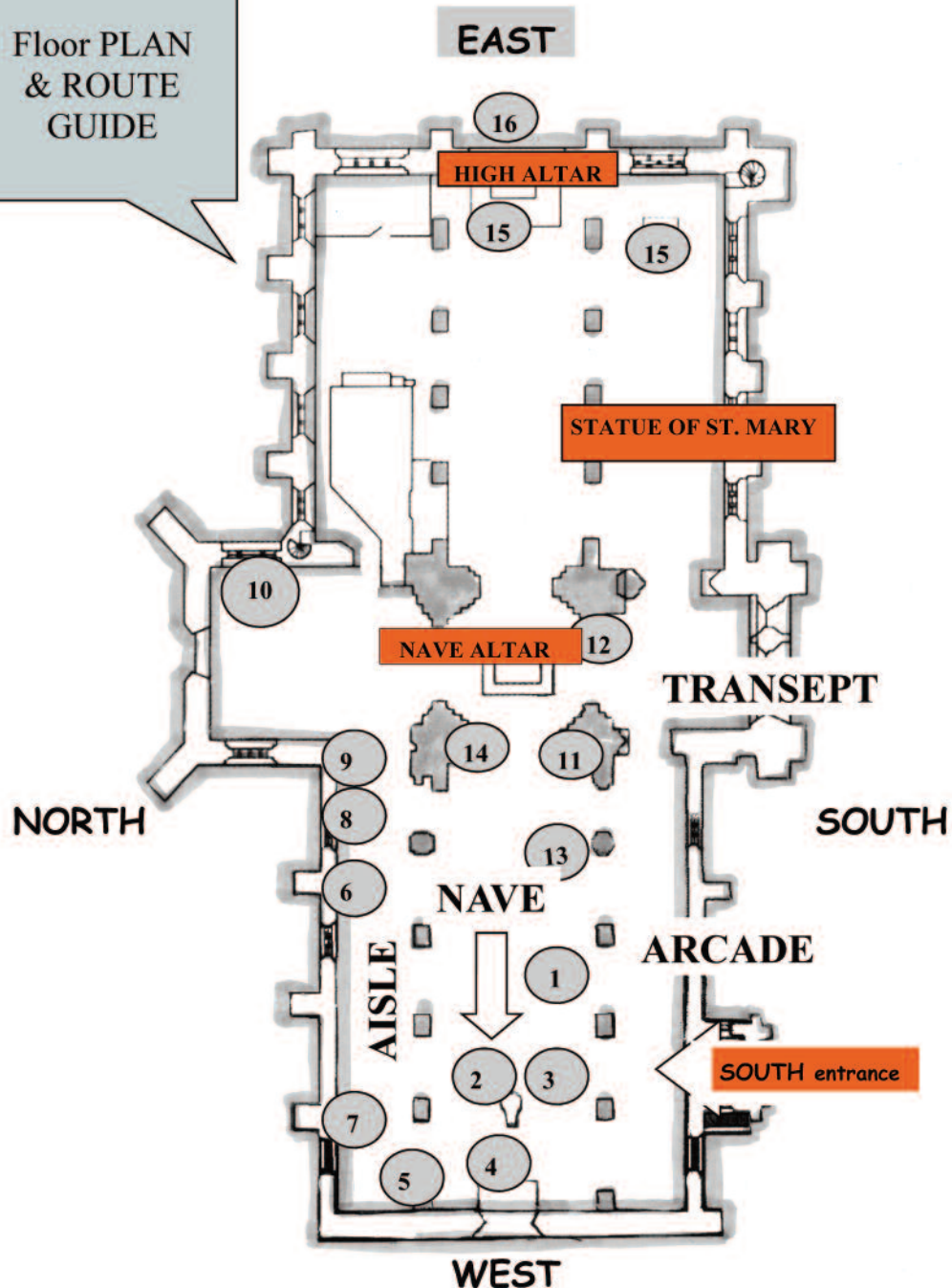
www.sdfas.org.uk

**ANSWERS AND EXTENDED
INFORMATION FOR ADULTS**

The Collegiate
Church of

Saint ⊕ Mary in Stafford

Floor PLAN
& ROUTE
GUIDE



WELCOME

For nearly 2000 years churches have been built to the glory of God, and as centres of worship and prayer, where the sacraments can be celebrated, the Word of God read to the people, and his message be heard in the sermon.

This trail has been prepared by volunteers from Stafford Decorative and Fine Arts Society
a member society of

NADFAS (National Association of Decorative & Fine Arts Society).

Its aim is to encourage young people, schools and families, to investigate the rich historical, architectural and decorative materials in this church, and to use these to explore Christian belief and worship. The Trail contains key Citizenship skills, including investigation, interpretation, reflection, empathy, communication and listening, and addresses National Curriculum requirements at Key Stages 1-3, in RE, Art and Design, History and English, Science and Maths. It is an ideal project for children of all religious backgrounds and could lead to further extended work in the classroom. Copies in other languages are envisaged.

We invite you to support the young people in their enquiries, by prompting their learning through discovery, allowing the opportunity to question and determine answers to the questions. If you require more information, it can be found in the brief notes below, or found in the excellent range of literature to be found near the entrance to this church.

SECTION 1, NAMING PARTS OF THE CHURCH

CHURCH FLOOR PLANS, more often than not, have the shape of a cross (**cruciform**), with the **Nave** and **Chancel**, **North** and **South aisles**, intersected by the **Crossing** and **Transepts**. This construction, importantly, supports the Tower

and Spire. St. Mary's once had a spire. Transepts also provided further eastern walls, which held extra altars. Sometimes, as on the North Transept, these are still marked by a **Piscina**, an arched niche with a basin and a drain, for rinsing the communion vessels, and an **Aumbrey**, a small cupboard used for keeping the Communion vessels and books. A second **Piscina** can be found on the East wall by the Lady Chapel.



Please check that the vocabulary boxes on the Young People's Trail map are filled in correctly. The spaces give clues as to the word.

The missing words to be filled in are Arcades, Aisles, Transept and Nave.

Page 5. A pointed roof should be drawn.

SECTIONS 2,3 THE FONT,IMAGES AND SYMBOLS

The Font, to the West, and traditionally near the entrance to the church is usually a large stone bowl, with a lead lining. St Mary's Font is the oldest object in the church, and probably Norman in origin. A Latin inscription carved round the rim includes a warning about lions, which are carved near the base. Simplistic, carved human figures, a ram and monkeys can be seen.



Answer to 3. The ram is strange because it has two bodies. The head is shown on a corner position yet when seen from a side view appears to have only one body.



SECTION 4, THE NAVE ORGAN

Built by Hill, Norman and Beard and installed before the West door in 1974, the Nave organ is used to accompany the congregation in worship, when their singing is led by the choir, who also sit here for principal services. The former organ by John Geib had been sited in a gallery above this location allowing the West door to be used. The beautiful organ case which cost £820 in 1790 has been retained.

Answer to 4. There are six gilded cherubs on the case. In Latin numerals that is VI. The case is marked in Roman numerals MDCCCXLIV which is 1844 (date of restoration).

SECTION 5, THE LANCET WINDOW

This long narrow window in the far corner of the west wall was designed by A.W. N Pugin, one of our most famous architects of the 19th. Century. He designed the interior to the Palace of Westminster (Houses of Parliament). This window was made by Hardman, of Birmingham and depicts St. John the Evangelist who wrote one of the Gospels.



Answers to 5. Colours included in this stained glass are red, green, yellow, gold, blue, brown, black. The halo (roundel) surrounding St. John's head depicts his status. He is holding a quill feather and a book emphasising that he was a writer. He is also shown with an Eagle, which is his sign. Each of the Gospel writers has a sign or symbol which was readily understood in the past by the illiterate masses .

SECTION 6, MODERN STAINED GLASS WINDOW

The windows in the North wall are perpendicular in style, a period of Gothic which followed the Decorated style. The most significant stained glass however is the last, a modern panel designed by David Gleeson.

Answer to 6. The window records Stafford's shoe industry.



The male workers are wearing aprons and they are hand stitching leather shoes which they did especially before machinery took over most of the production. One man is trimming surplus leather from the sole of a shoe with a special knife. A woman is working on a machine (depicting the 20th. Century mechanisation). Small hammers and nails to fasten some sections together (from medieval times) can be seen in the design as well as large patterns of the foot shape. The River Sow's meandering shape is copied by a shoelace at the base of the design.

The most famous of our shoe manufacturers was Lotus. Their shoes and boots for men, women and children were sold all over the world. Terraces of early Victorian worker's houses in the shoe industry can be seen in the centre of Stafford close to where former factories were once sited.



SECTION 7, MONUMENT TO IZAAK WALTON

Framed by a blocked off doorway is the bust of Izaak Walton, famed as a fisherman, and author of *The Compleat Angler*. He was a famous biographer. He was baptised here in St Mary's, in the same

font we have just looked at. In those days the font was positioned at the back of the Nave between the last few pews.

Answer to 7. A piscator means a fisherman. He was born in 1593 and died in 1683 aged 90 years. He was buried in Winchester Cathedral.

SECTION 7, BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE,

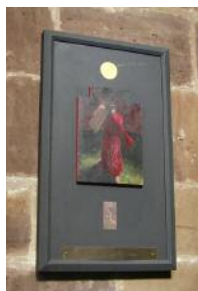
As you move on into the **North Transept**, you pass the **Book of Remembrance**, commemorating local people killed in the two world wars. Notice also behind you to the right other memorials on the walls in stone and brass again in memory of worshippers to this church.



SECTION 9, THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

(by local artist Dave Gleeson).

These are to be found on the South and North walls of the Nave and also on the Crossing. Stations are places like a school bus stop where people wait while they are going from one place to another. In this situation 'Stations of the Cross' are places where people pause to think about Jesus as he went to die on a cross. Each station represents each time Jesus stopped along that final journey to his cruel death from his trial and condemnation by Pilate to his final resting place in the tomb. The stations in this church are in the form of paintings on wood. Smaller paintings of the gable end of local churches are shown beneath each main image, as a symbolic link with local churches. Each station is marked with its order of sequence on a gold disc with an accompanying description.



Answer to 9.

No. 2 panel's description reads, Jesus carries his cross.

No. 5 panel's description reads, Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross.

SECTION 8, SIR EDWARD ASTON'S TOMB

Sir Edward's tomb can be found in the North Transept. The **North Transept** was built between 1310 and 1340, in the Decorated style, which succeeded the Early English. Window tracery and columns have become more elaborate. The old pointed roofline can be seen again on the north wall as well as on the Crossing.

*** Please be careful of the steps by the North door at this point.**

After the Reformation this part of the church was put to secular use, for the Assize courts, for example, and it is said that a jury box collapsing caused Sir Edward Aston's effigy to lose its head.

His image lies on the Alabaster tomb alongside his second wife Joan. Their children are shown symbolically on either side. The Knight was a very wealthy landowner near here and built Tixall Hall in 1580 (Elizabeth I's time) after demolishing the original Medieval manor house. Sir Edward Aston, became High Sheriff of Staffordshire in about 1555 and the family were later raised to the Peerage. Although the Hall was demolished in 1780, and a later one built, only the famous Gate-house, remains.



Answer to 10. Sir Edward Aston is shown wearing a suit of armour. His feet are shown resting on a lion. Two coats of arms can be seen on the side of the tomb closest their heads and one at their feet on the wall. One belongs to Lady Aston.



Heraldry dates back to the 12th. Century when knights in Western Europe first wore symbols (or badges) for identification in battle. No man was allowed to use armorial bearings already used by another. The shields vary in shape and the division of the shape and the charges (motifs) are numerous. This coat-of-arms features lions and a cross upon a Florid shape. Women, like Lady Aston, could use armorial bearings gained by family descent, like the coat-of-arms by her head depicting the conjoined wings of an eagle.

Traditionally images of children from the marriage are depicted on the sides of ancient tombs.

It would appear therefore that they had 8 sons, 7 daughters and 3 babies who died in infancy or were still born. A total of 18 children.



11, THE LECTERN

This object is used for supporting the open Bible when being read during services. It is usually placed between the Chancel and the Nave and is usually in the form of an eagle with outstretched wings or a pelican. The eagle is the symbol of St. John whose writings witnessed the divinity of Christ.

Answer to 11, St. Mary's lectern is made out of brass.

EMBROIDERED KNEELERS -

12, CHURCH HISTORY

Embroidered kneelers have a practical purpose when kneeling for prayer as well as being beautiful to look at. St. Mary's has an abundance of richly coloured and individually interesting kneelers designed and made by members of the church and organisations who worship here. To the right and left of the Nave Altar, positioned on the steps, can be seen modern embroidered kneelers which show different stages in the history of the church.

Answers to 12 The spire which used to surmount the central Tower was destroyed in 1594. Sir George Gilbert Scott, the famous Victorian architect intended to replace it when he organised the restoration of this church in the 1840's but ran out of money. He added eight pinnacles to the castellated octagon of the tower instead .

15, SYMBOLS OF SAINTS

The four modern kneelers on the steps to the High Altar and the steps to the Lady Chapel Altar are placed in an identical arrangement.



They show the signs of the four

Evangelists – a man for Matthew, a lion for Mark, an ox for Luke and the eagle for John. All are shown with wings and a halo to emphasise their status as saints.

Answer to 15. Saint John's symbol is an eagle.

13, POPPYHEADS

Pews are a fairly modern invention. Previously the congregation would stand or be free to wander around unless they were infirm and might sit on stone seats near to columns. With the importance of sermons came a need to sit for long periods. At the pew ends in St. Marys you can find bishops, eagles, royalty and even a Green man carved from oak. The Green man is always interesting, as it is essentially a pagan symbol, but the Oak leaves used earlier are now Vine leaves, symbolising the triumph over Paganism by Christianity. (Biblical reference - John 15,) Notice the brass numbers on the ends of each pew, a legacy from the days when those that could paid for enclosed box like pews for their family.



14, THE PULPIT

Situated at the Crossing and facing the congregation, the pulpit is in a prominent position for the congregation to see the priest deliver his sermon. As the platform on which he stands is elevated he/she can also see the people. This was especially important in the days when people sat in enclosed box pews. The priest's voice could be heard more clearly from this vantage point.

Answer to 14.

The stairs allow the priest to access the platform from which he speaks to the congregation.



16, THE EAST WINDOW BY THE HIGH ALTAR

Leaving the Lady Chapel, you enter the area of the **Sanctuary** and **Chancel**. The Chancel still has elaborate seating in the style of the seats set aside for the Canons of the Middle Ages. These were designed by Scott during his extensive re-styling of the church. They would have been used by the Choir until they moved to the West side of the Church.

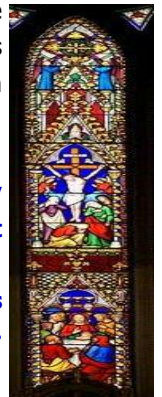
The Sanctuary, the area between the altar rails and the East wall, contains the High Altar with the cross, reminding worshippers of the death of Jesus, and candlesticks (sources of light but also reminding us that Christ is the 'Light of the World'). Above the High Altar, the fine East Window shows scenes from the Passion of Christ, or Holy Week, starting with Him riding a donkey into Jerusalem.

Answer to 16.

The Last Supper. We see Jesus sitting at a table surrounded by his twelve disciples. This became the basis for the Eucharist (the Church's central act of worship),

On the top of the Cross, in the crucifixion scene, are the letters INRI, recalling the title, in Latin, which Herod placed there - 'Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews'.

In some churches you can also spot the monogram HIS. These are the first three letters of Jesus in Greek.



*On the right side of the East wall there is also an ancient parish chest where precious church objects were stored in the past. These usually have three locks for security. This very sturdy chest is made out of oak from local trees.

LEAVING THE HIGH ALTAR AND RETURNING DOWN THE NAVE

***Oak plays a significant part in the construction of the church and the objects within it. Much of it was obtained from Doxey Woods.** Notice the Altar screens and the seating for the clergy close to the High Altar and to the rear of the Choir stalls. Notice the intricate carving of heads and the way the backs of the seats curve in to the body and support it when standing for long periods of time. Before you leave the church, you could spend some time looking at the carved pew ends. Each pew is numbered reminding us of the time when seats had to be rented in church, at least until some free seats were brought in in the C.19th.

***Notice the beautiful stained glass windows.**

Returning to the West End, you pass through the South Transept and will see, on the south wall, glass by Ward and Nixon, showing the ancestry of Jesus, back to King David and Jesse. This is known also as a 'Jesse window'. The South Aisle dates from the 13th Century the windows are later and the glass 20th Century! Particularly interesting is the last window, which features Diuma and Chad, early Bishops of Mercia, and St Bertelin. St Chad was the first Mercian bishop to live in Lichfield, and St. Bertelin brought Christianity, afresh, to the area in the 7th Century He is commemorated in Lichfield Cathedral, which was a great centre for Mediaeval pilgrimage.

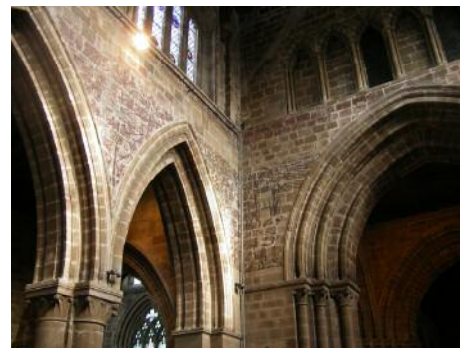
***As you leave the church by the south porch,** you will see a bishop and a king either side of the doorway, reminding us of the place of the Monarch and the bishops in the authority structures of the Church, since the Church in England broke with Rome and the Pope at the Reformation.

***Then look round the outside of the building** and find the buttressing supporting the walls, the tower, blocked doorways, and gargoyles which served to throw the water away from the foundations of the building. Round to the west lies the outline of St Bertelin's chapel built around 1000A.D. and demolished in 1801. Of course there are many gravestones and memorials, including a fine poetic tribute to Mr. Bernard Fry in 1827. This local surgeon died treating the people in Stafford Poor House following an outbreak of typhus (acute contagious fever transmitted to man by rat fleas– **very unpleasant!**).



SOME ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE BASED ON THIS TRAIL

1. Producing a word search based on all the vocabulary learned on the Trail.
2. Understanding and working out Roman numerals in today's numbers.
3. Making a stained glass picture out of clear plastic and coloured tissue paper.
4. Design and print a repeating tile design like the Minton tiles seen in the Sanctuary (using press polystyrene or lino blocks).
5. Design then make an embroidered kneeler.
6. Design and make a paper maché chest for storing valuables. Study the chest against the East wall for inspiration.
7. Producing a rubbing from brass or stone memorials. **(May need permission for this).**
8. Design or make a scary gargoyle in mixed media.
9. Research the work and times of Izaak Walton.
10. Research Elizabethan costume after noting Lady Aston's clothing or Sir Edward Aston's armour.
11. Research heraldry. Find out more and design a personal coat of arms.
12. Make a family tree picture. Take inspiration from the Jesse window.
13. Study different styles of windows or doors in church buildings. Learn to date buildings as a result.
14. Discover the meaning of **symbols** in Christian Art.
15. Discover more churches and build on the knowledge of the architecture and function of these beautiful buildings.
16. Try bell ringing or if you like singing, sing in a church choir.



**GOODBYE.
We hope you have
enjoyed your visit.**



**Poppyhead carving in
oak on the end of a pew.**

**TRAIL DESIGNED BY STAFFORD DECORATIVE AND FINE ARTS SOCIETY
YOUNG ARTS TEAM VOLUNTEERS 2010 (PC,TB,SY,FB,AC)
Stafford DFAS is a member society of NADFAS
Print edited by Jack Barber SDFAS
Master copy and photography by Pam Cartwright SDFAS (2010)**