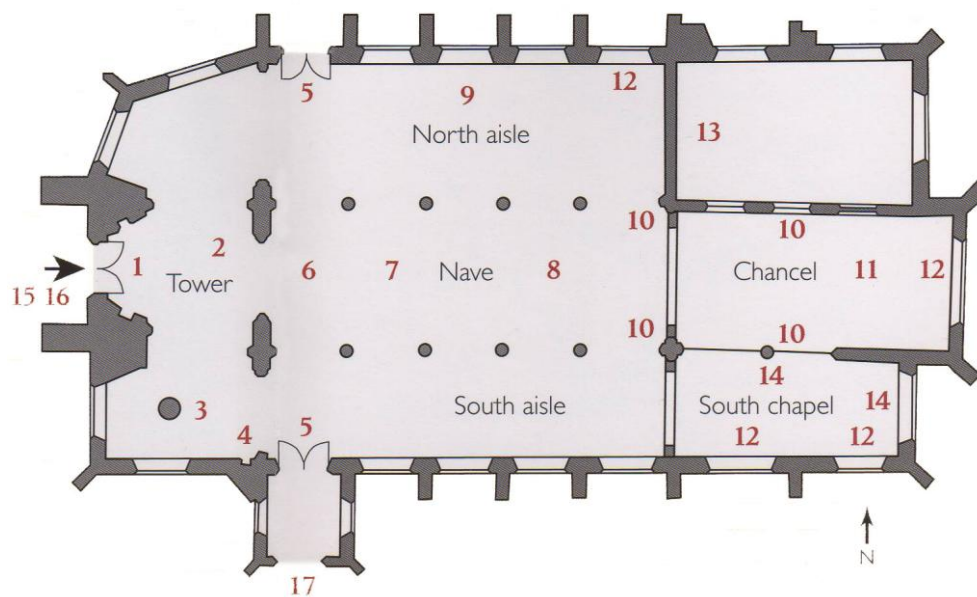


# ST PETER'S WALKTHROUGH GUIDE

Roger Green, Heritage Officer

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*On entering St Peter's at the base of the Tower and passing through the main entrance doors, you are greeted by an impressive long view down the Nave, flanked on both sides by support columns and the aisles. There is a lot to take in; this walk-through guide will help to focus your attention.*



1. There is a ring of ten bells, the oldest dating from 1470. The two newest bells were added in 1978. In March 1863 the rector forbade a peal of bells to celebrate the marriage of the Prince of Wales because it was the season of Lent. Under cover of darkness the bell ringers used ladders to scale the walls and climb over the roof into the tower, staying and ringing the bells all day, refreshed by supplies of food and ale hauled up through the tower windows.

2. There was a gallery under the tower at one time. Some of the supports protrude from the walls.

3. The bowl of the font dates from the 15th century. In 1654, during the Civil War, the town mayor removed the font from the church and set it up as a drinking trough for the horses. According to tradition they refused to use it.

4. Notice the carved angel over the tiny door leading to an upper room above the porch. It is unusual in having a forked beard.

5. Above the two side doors hang pictures of Moses (north) and Aaron (south) by Robert Cardinall, dating from about 1730. These were discovered in 1980, hidden on top of the organ. Mid-19th-century drawings show them hanging above the chancel arch.
6. The east of the building is out of alignment. This is commonly called a weeping chancel which is a relatively common phenomenon in parish churches and is sometimes thought to symbolise Christ's hanging head on the cross. Here, changes to the original alignment may have been dictated by encroachment of other buildings.
7. The 15th century nave ceiling is remarkable and very unusual. It is rather like fan vaulting in timber. It was restored in 1685 and again in the 1850s.
8. In 1859 the rector decided, controversially, to sell the church pews to regain a spacious medieval nave. They were removed during the night of 30 March to be sold on Market Hill the following morning, but an injunction was obtained by some parishioners to prevent the sale. When served with the injunction, the auctioneer put it in his pocket and read it after the sale.
9. Enjoy the humour of the medieval craftsmen who carved many of the bosses high up in the building. In the north aisle several represent the Green Man.
10. A large rood screen once ran across the entire church at the top of the chancel steps, probably something like the beautifully carved Tudor parclose screens in the chancel. The tower that contained the staircase to the roof loft can still be seen outside the church on the north side and the remains of passageways are visible high in the chancel arch. At each side of the arch stand probable base panels of the screen. These were painted by Richard Gainsborough Dupont, a relative of Sudbury's most famous son, Thomas Gainsborough. Above the chancel arch, just below the roof, hangs perhaps the last relic of the rood screen inscribed 'Bread of life, cup of blessing, precious blood, poured for you, upon the rood, Alleluia, Alleluia'.
11. The chancel was redecorated twice during the 19th century, first in the 1850s by William Butterfield. In 1897 the second scheme, by G F Bodley, comprised strong colours offset by gold. Most of his decoration was obliterated in 1964 though some survives on the upper section of the chancel arch and in the impressive reredos to the high altar. The displayed reconstruction suggests how the area of the priests' sedilia might once have looked.
12. During Butterfield's mid-19th century redecoration, the scheme for the stained glass windows by Messrs Hardman of Birmingham was begun.
13. The three manual organ was built in 1911 by Messrs Lewis and Co. It is a fine example of late Edwardian organ design.
14. In the south chapel stands the fine hand-carved altar in oak with carvings in box given anonymously in 1907. Close by, graffiti of late medieval origin, in the form of a crucifixion and various smaller crosses have been carved into a column.

**15.** The superb dimensioned tower rises some 30 metres. It was taller when topped by a copper and wood spire or fleche. This was removed in 1968 and the structure of the tower reinforced internally with concrete beams.

**16.** The tower contains the four-faced clock. The mechanism dates from 1874 but is now driven by electricity.

**17.** Below the sundial on the outside of the south porch is another fine example of a Green Man.